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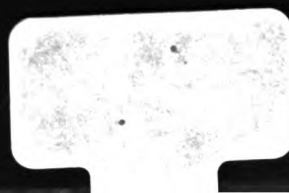




*The changing year, poems
and pictures of life and nature*



600087566







"A group of children, gay and blithe,
Amid the hay keep carnival."
In a Hayfield (p. 103).

THE
CHANGING YEAR

BEING

Poems and Pictures of Life and Nature.

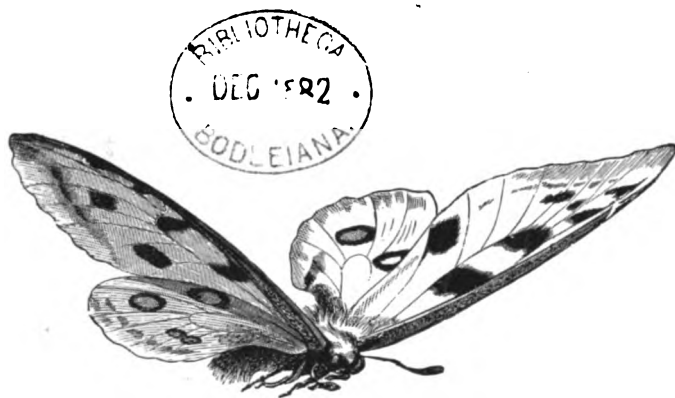
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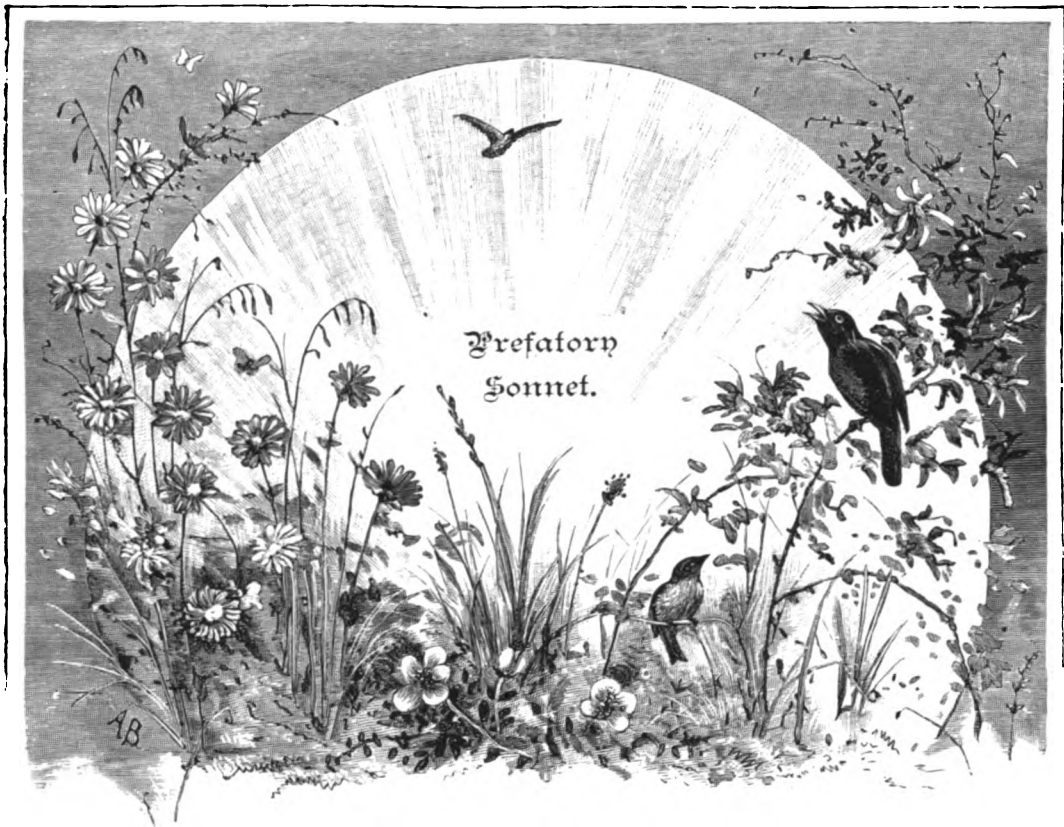
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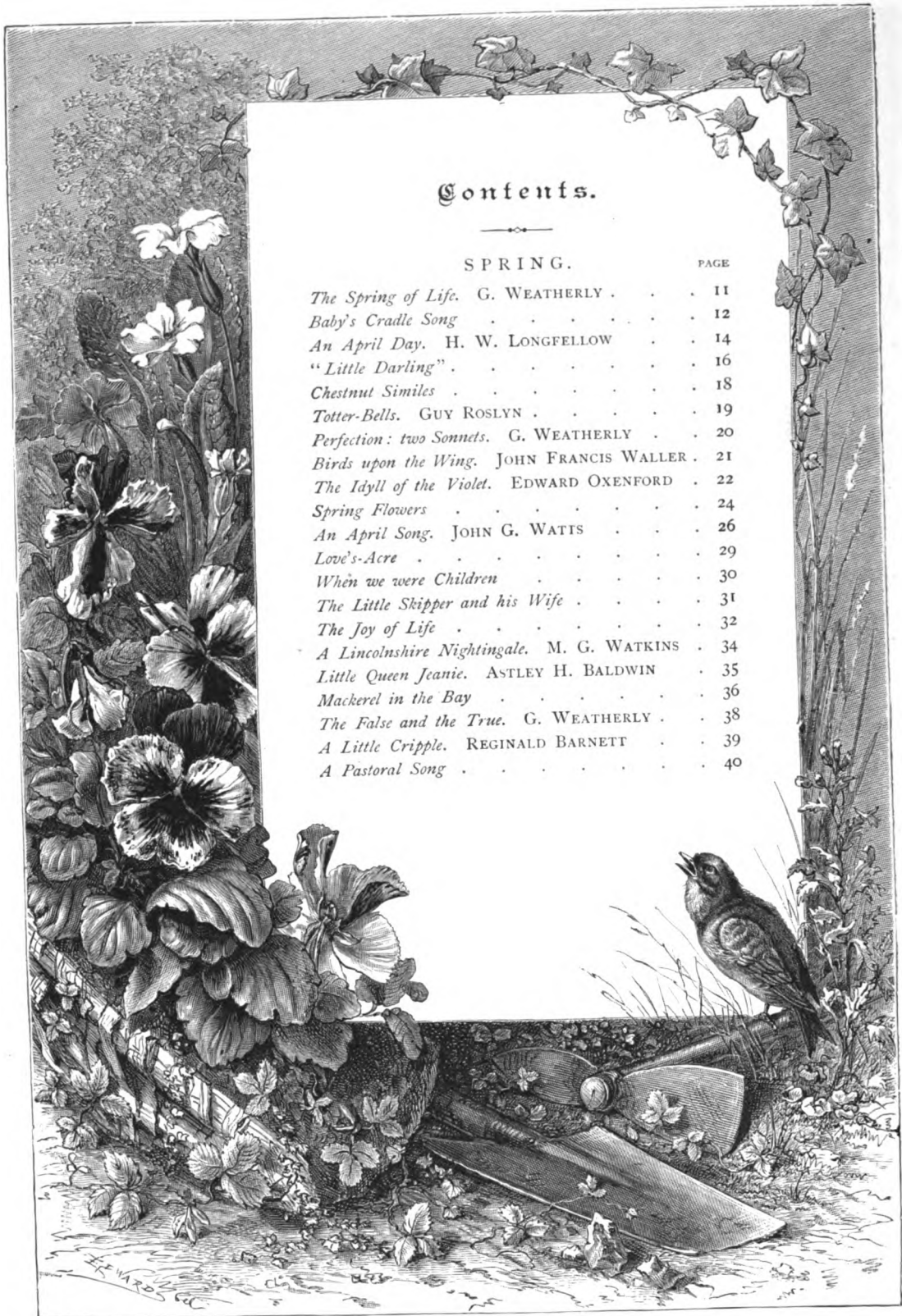
FROM dawn to dark, from brightest gold to grey,
From boisterous winds of March to April shower,
From Summer strength to Winter's failing power,
The year speeds ever on its changeful way.
For Nature garbs herself anew each day :
In sky and field and stream, in leaf and flower,
The watchful eye sees changes every hour,
From Spring-tide birth to Autumn's sad decay.

So too with Man : no day is like the last,
And yet 'tis hard each stage of growth to trace !
Unconsciously the earliest hours are passed,
And Spring is merged in Summer's strength and grace ;
Then Autumn, with its mingled gold and gloom,
Leads gently on to Winter and the tomb.

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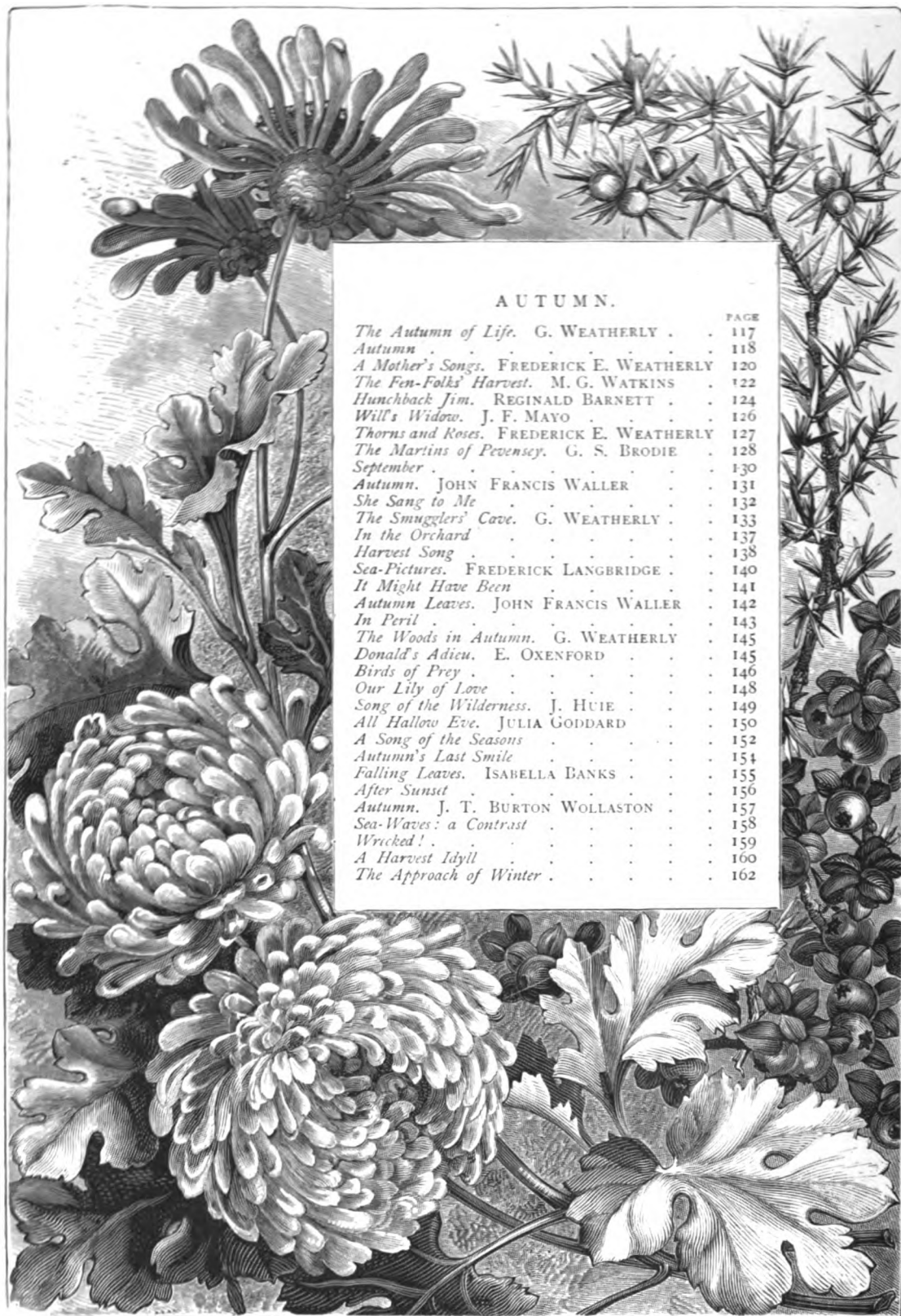


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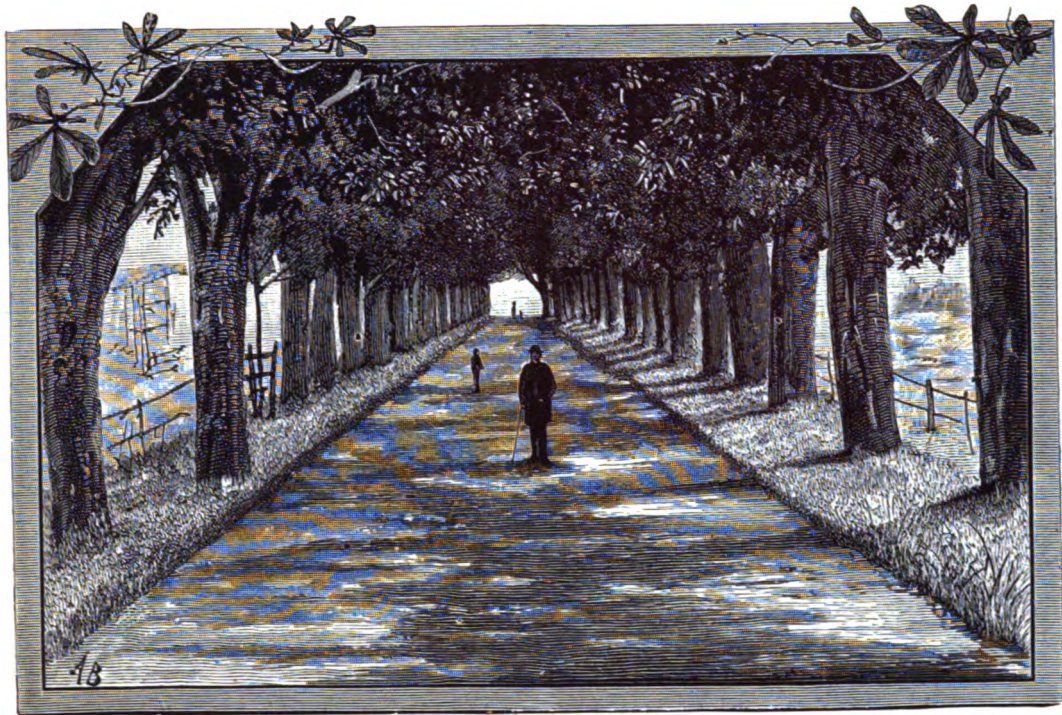
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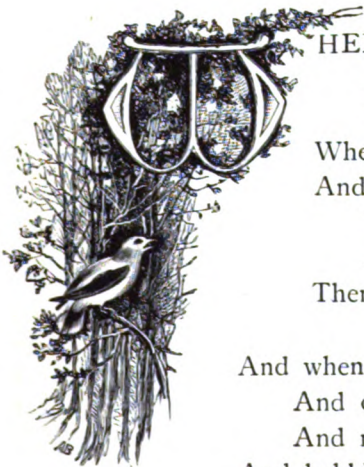
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THE CHANGING YEAR.

THE SPRING OF LIFE.



WHEN the first snowdrop's shyly opening,
 And violets on the sheltered bank are seen ;
 When trees put forth their tender shoots of green ;
 When birds awake from winter sleep, and sing,
 And choose their mates and fly with busy wing ;
 When streamlets babble mossy banks between,
 And butterflies flash forth with sunny sheen—
 Then the young year is in its joyous Spring.

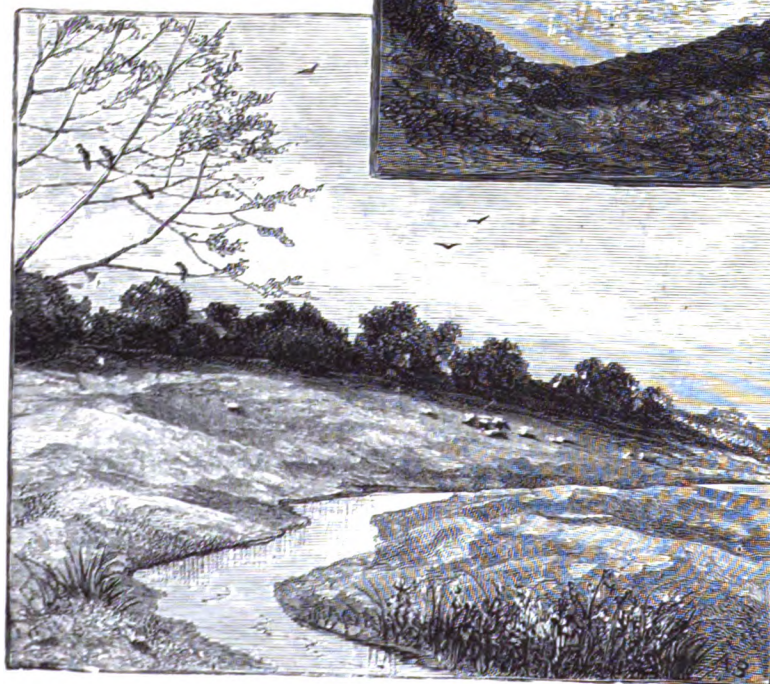
And when the air is full of baby cries,
 And children's laughter echoing down the street,
 And noisy patterings of little feet,
 And babbling sounds of lessons old and wise ;
 When day by day brings strength to think and do—
 Then Life is in its happy Spring-tide, too.



BABY'S CRADLE SONG.

WHEN sets the sun,
and day is done,
And peaceful eve
hides all our care,
When screech-owls cry and
brown bats fly

Through the flow'r-fragrant even-
ing air ;
When the purple hills grow dark
Far over the dusky moor,
And the noisy sheep-dogs bark
By the vine-hung cottage
door—



Then, tenderly, oh, ten-
derly,
While the faint lights fade
and die,
Mother, sitting baby nigh,
Softly sings her lullaby.

When black is night and
stars shine bright,
And wolves are howling
round the fold,
Where all asleep lie lambs
and sheep,
And winds are blowing
chill and cold :

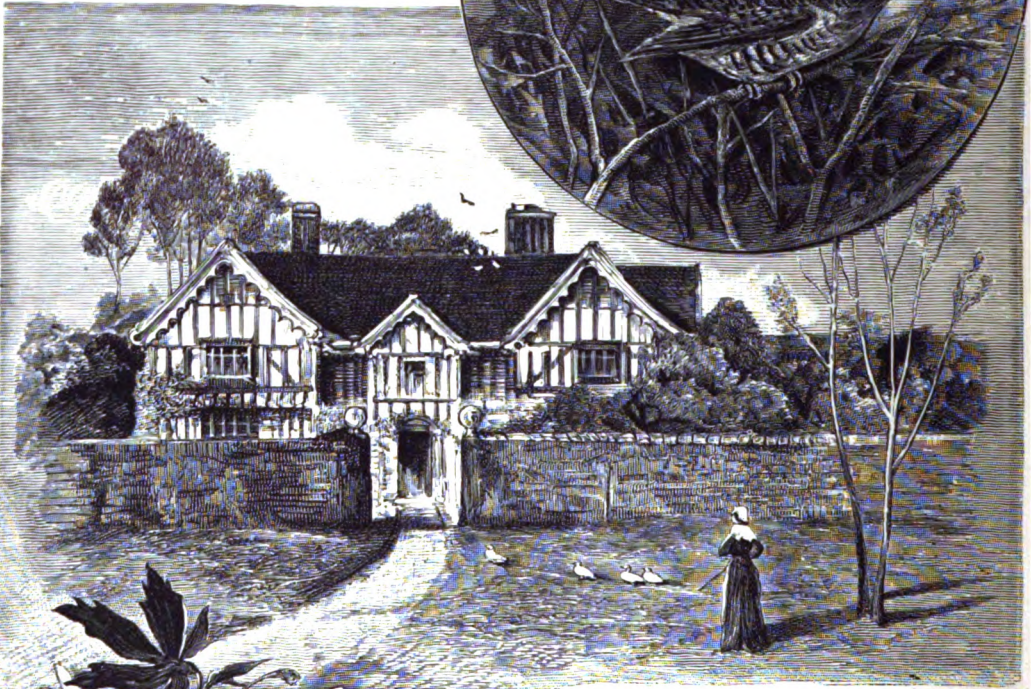


AN APRIL DAY.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

WHEN the warm sun, that brings
Seed-time and harvest, has
returned again,
'Tis sweet to visit the still
wood, where springs
The first flower of the plain.

I love the season well,
When forest glades are teeming with
bright forms,



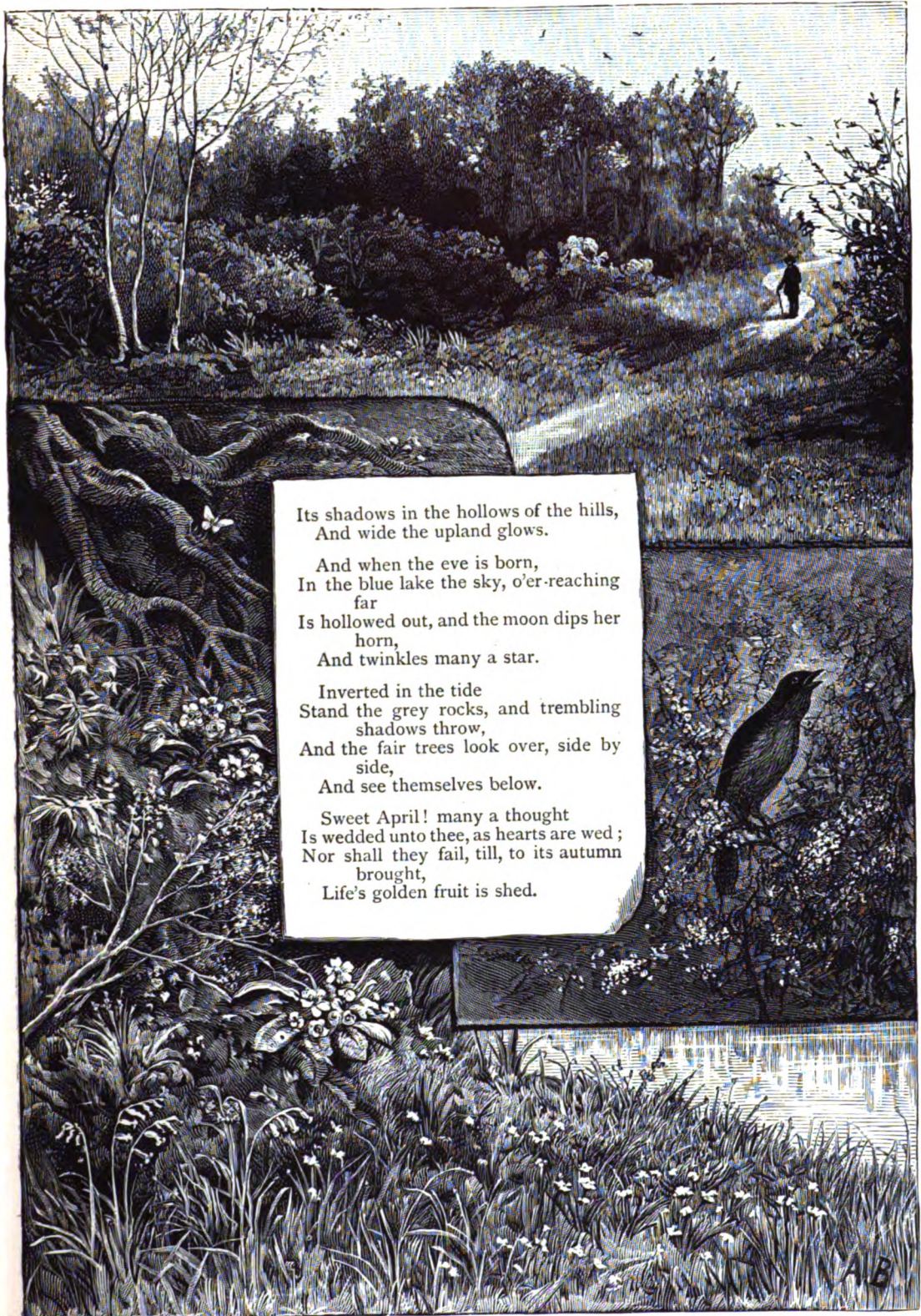
A.B.

Nor dark and many-folded clouds foretell
The coming on of storms.

From the earth's loosened mould
The sapling draws its sustenance, and
thrives ;
Though stricken to the heart with winter's
cold,
The drooping tree revives.

The softly-warbled song
Comes from the pleasant woods, and
coloured wings
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves
along
The forest openings.

When the bright sunset fills
The silver woods with light, the green
slope throws



Its shadows in the hollows of the hills,
And wide the upland glows.

And when the eve is born,
In the blue lake the sky, o'er-reaching
far
Is hollowed out, and the moon dips her
horn,
And twinkles many a star.

Inverted in the tide
Stand the grey rocks, and trembling
shadows throw,
And the fair trees look over, side by
side,
And see themselves below.

Sweet April! many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;
Nor shall they fail, till, to its autumn
brought,
Life's golden fruit is shed.

"LITTLE DARLING."

A STORY OF THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.

TOWARDS the close of summer day,
Where endless lines of traffic meet,
A lonely child came forth to play
About the crowded city street.
Though many passed, yet none might heed
So poor a little waif and stray ;
Ne'er recking for her utmost need,
All hastened past upon their way.

That friendless child had one heart-joy—
A treasure, small, in rapture found ;
'T was but a simple shattered toy ;
Perchance thrown, useless, on the ground.
To her it proved a mine of gold,
A ceaseless bliss by day or night :
Vast empire's heir, with wealth untold,
Could not have bought such pure delight.

When, as she frolicked o'er the road,
And danced her cherished doll at play,
Unmarked, approached a pond'rous load,
From fragrant meadows far away :
Its guardian guiltless, still, of blame,
Upon his toilsome task intent,



Saw not the tender fragile frame
Swept to her doom : thus onward went.

A warning cry rose, thrilling, wild ;
An eager throng—drawn nigh too late—
In pity snatched the hapless child,
Sought vainly to avert her fate.
Her kindred and her home are—where ?
Their guide a babe who scarce can speak,
But sadly seems to plead, "Not there !"
With timid mien and accents weak.

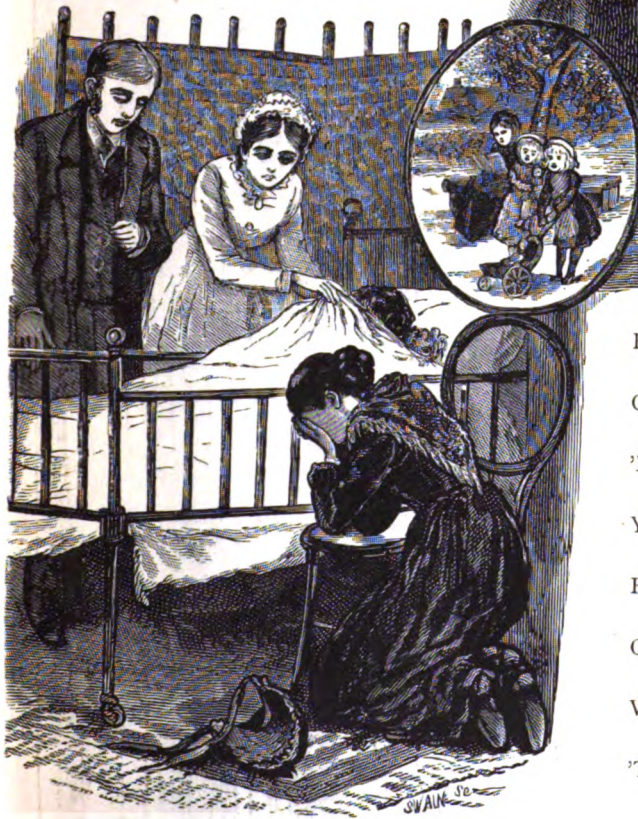
Safe, sheltered on a hallowed spot
(Such guests an earnest welcome meet),
The plaintive story is forgot,
Where her sole play-ground was the street.
Nor care, nor skill, can aught avail,
To stay life's feeble flick'ring flame.
The past, recalled through links too frail
Fails even to reveal her name.

Within a peaceful snow-white bed,
Now lulled to rest, relieved from pain,
Reclines that lovely youthful head,
Which ne'er will rise on earth again.
While calmly wanes each tranquil day,
The might is given of willing hand :
When evening fades she learns to pray—
A world, for her, like Eden's land.

Bright flowers greet those wond'ring eyes ;
Till here, an unknown undreamt joy.
Yet fast she holds her life's first prize,
Clasped in her arms, the broken toy.
Oft, list'ning, as the song of birds
Falls, in sweet music, on her ear—
Midst gentle voices, fondest words—
She thinks—how truly !—heaven is near

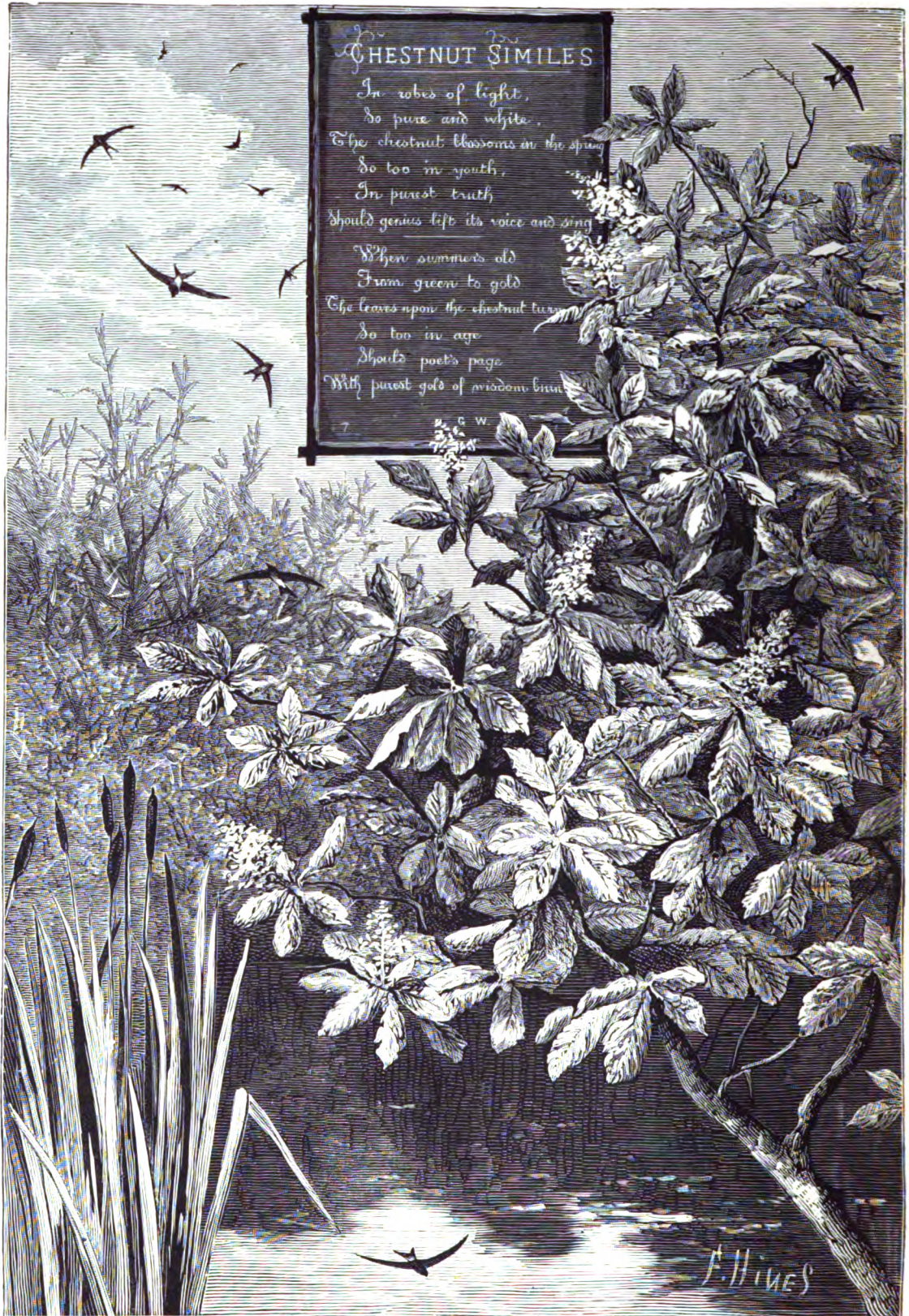
At sunlit dawn they wake, to weep.
One, dearly loved of all around,
Hath passed away in smiling sleep,
An angel's name and home has found.
By those who strove, untired, to save,
Many a heart-wrung tear is shed.
"To 'Little Darling'" marks a grave,
Where they have laid the early-dead.

* * * * *



How many happy children rove through pastures
wide and fair,
Clear streamlets glisten in the sun, and blossoms
scent the air ;
'Neath shady grove, o'er hill-side free, safe paths
they gladly trace ;
Yet ne'er may ask, to others' gain, some narrow
humble space,
For little ones who never gazed across the bright
blue sea,
Or danced like fairies on the sand, with healthful
mirth and glee ;
Who never roamed a daisied plain, or heather-
tinted moor ;
'T were well that children of the rich gave play-
grounds to the poor.

A. A. L. M.





TOTTER-BELLS. *

HOW green and long the grass is where
we lie,
In secret shaded ground !
The laughing wind creeps in, then hurries by,
And the wide fern bends low ; then rising, swells,
And sets a-swinging all the totter-bells,
That ring without a sound.

How strange that memory should hang about
A frond of trembling grass !
I see old totter-bells, and hear the shout
Of schoolboys running home along the lanes,
Where the sun, swelt'ring in a sea of stains,
Gilds every pane of glass.

When I was petted in a pinafore,
And kept a wooden cow,
You stood each side the clock behind the door
Like ears, and when the bells began to sound,
You shook for fear, and fell into a swoond,
At that strange, stinging row.

And even now are you awaiting woe,
Though green below the blue ;
And you are sad because the breeze will blow—
Because the giant butterflies will come,
And set the blust'ring bees to swarm and hum
All day, and frighten you.

GUY ROSLYN.

* Trembling grass.

PERFECTION: TWO SONNETS.

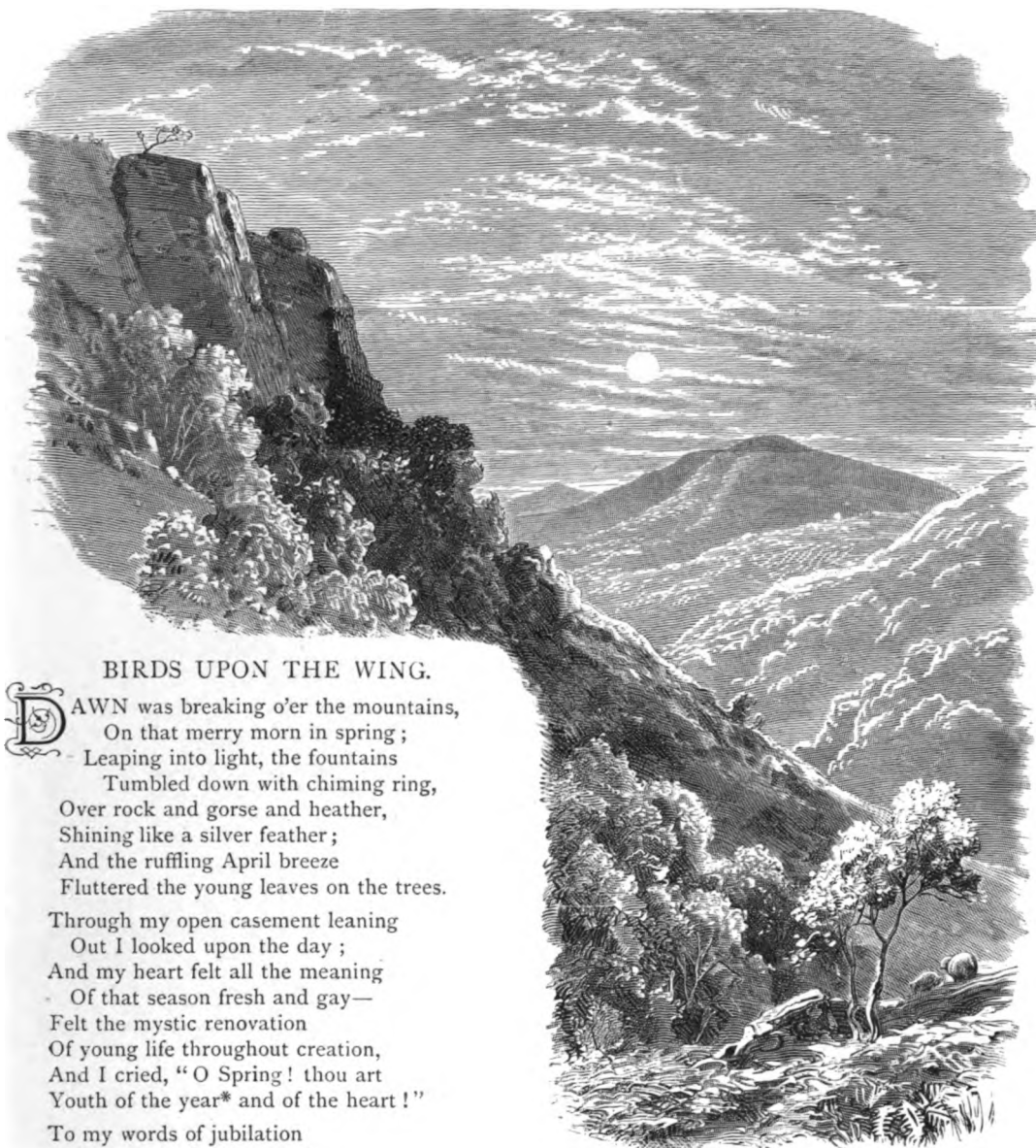


I.

ALL-CONSCIOUS of a power that strangely came
 And thrilled each nerve, a maiden lingered long,
 Seeking some noble subject pure and strong,
 That she might paint, and win a golden fame.
 But all her seeking was but fraught with shame :
 She sought perfection and she sought in vain ;
 Men, women—heroes, heroines—the stain
 Of long life-journeys tarnished every name.
 And then she took her brush, half in despair,
 And traced a child's face delicately fair,
 Unmarred by sin and sweet with every grace ;
 And these the words she wrote beneath it there :
 " Perfection is not ; but its noblest trace
 Is surely hidden in a child's sweet face."

II.

A dreamer read the lines and turned away,
 His soul all stirred within him—"Can it be ?
 Perfection nearest found in infancy ?
 The early dawning brighter than the day ?
 The moulded figure weaker than the clay ?"
 And then before his eyes cloud-fancies passed,
 And in their misty shapes he traced at last
 Grand noble faces, bright with purest ray ;
 Faces all marred, but rich with wondrous glow,
 Refined with fire and purified by woe—
 Women in weakness of their womanhood,
 Men in their strength, living for others' good :
 For as in gold are set fair jewels of price,
 Most perfect lives are set in sacrifice.



BIRDS UPON THE WING.

DAWN was breaking o'er the mountains,
On that merry morn in spring;
Leaping into light, the fountains
Tumbled down with chiming ring,
Over rock and gorse and heather,
Shining like a silver feather;
And the ruffling April breeze
Fluttered the young leaves on the trees.

Through my open casement leaning
Out I looked upon the day;
And my heart felt all the meaning
Of that season fresh and gay—
Felt the mystic renovation
Of young life throughout creation,
And I cried, "O Spring! thou art
Youth of the year* and of the heart!"

To my words of jubilation

Soon I heard a glad reply,
With a song of exaltation
Sprang the lark into the sky,
Flinging song like vocal sunlight,
Or the chant of waves by moonlight,
Ever up in spiral rings,
Circling on his tireless wings.

Bright choragus! rapt and glorious,
Of that holiest psalmody—

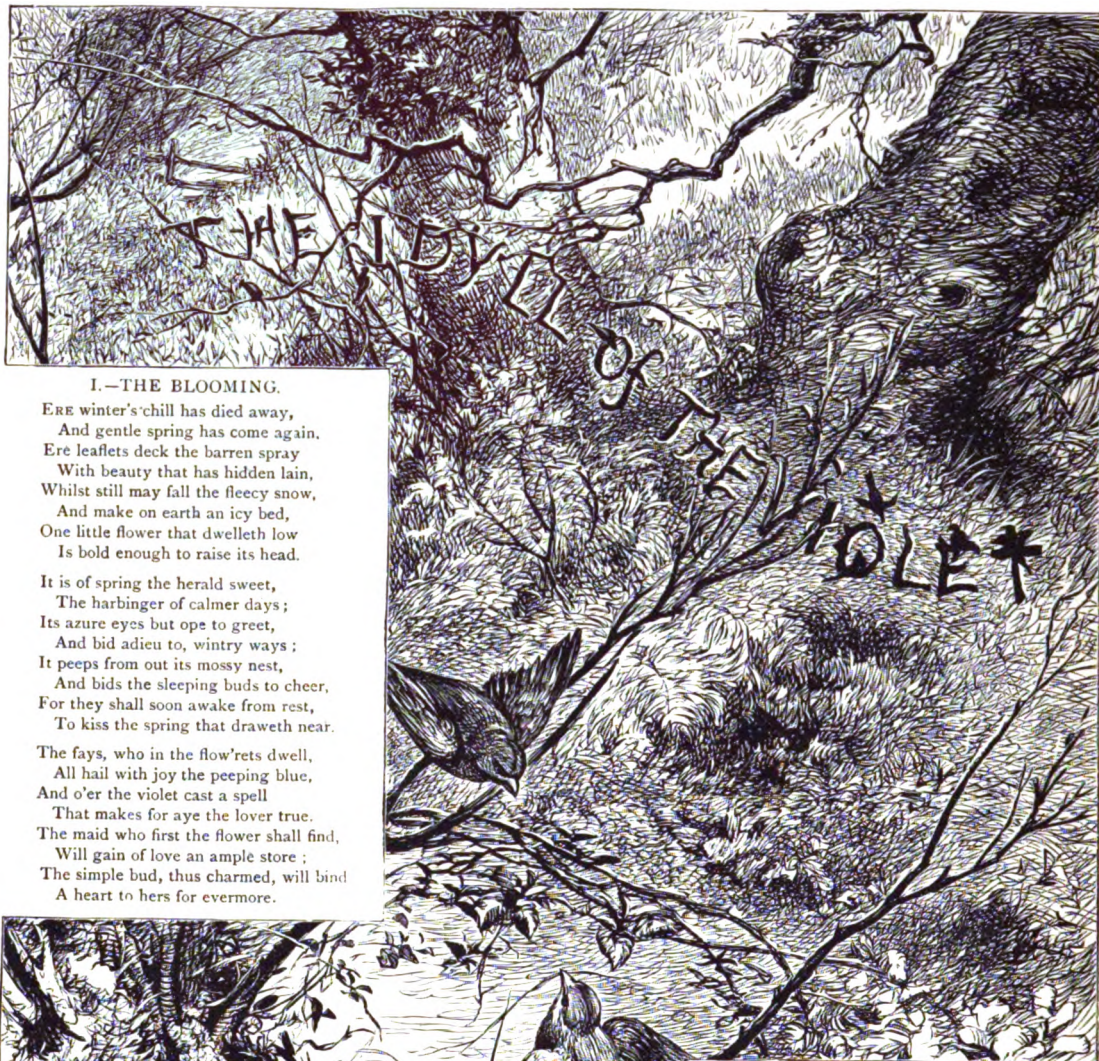
In a burst of praise uproarious,
Thrush and merle, from brake and tree,
Follow thy divine beginning,
Till the air with song is ringing,
And every bird is on the wing,
Like cherubs ceasing not to sing.

From their nests on tree-tops rocking,
Rise the rooks with clamorous tongue;
Like a black cloud see them flocking,
'Thwart the pearly morning flung;
Not discordant in the chorus
Is the corvine bass sonorous
With the tenor of the thrush,
And the skylark's treble gush.

Long I listened that bright morning
To the birds upon the wing,
Till the sun the hills adorning
Woke up man to labouring;
And I felt that all God's creatures
Are alike our spirit's teachers,
All alike their voices raise
In that mystic song of praise.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.

* "O primavera! gioventu del anno."—Tasso.



I.—THE BLOOMING.

ERE winter's chill has died away,
And gentle spring has come again,
Ere leaflets deck the barren spray
With beauty that has hidden lain,
Whilst still may fall the fleecy snow,
And make on earth an icy bed,
One little flower that dwelleth low
Is bold enough to raise its head.

It is of spring the herald sweet,
The harbinger of calmer days ;
Its azure eyes but ope to greet,
And bid adieu to, wintry ways ;
It peeps from out its mossy nest,
And bids the sleeping buds to cheer,
For they shall soon awake from rest,
To kiss the spring that draweth near.

The fays, who in the flow'rets dwell,
All hail with joy the peeping blue,
And o'er the violet cast a spell
That makes for aye the lover true.
The maid who first the flower shall find,
Will gain of love an ample store ;
The simple bud, thus charmed, will bind
A heart to hers for evermore.



II.—SYBIL'S SONG.

I KNOW that he is far away,
And that I cannot see him now ;
But o'er the sea there comes to me
The echo of a plighted vow.
A voice is wafted from afar,
As soft the ocean zephyrs blow,
His accents dear I plainly hear
As they were spoken long ago.

O I have waited, sad and lone,
Whilst two long years have journeyed by,
And no loved voice beside mine own
Has ever sooth'd the saddest sigh.
But now again shall sorrow flee,
And tender joy usurp its place ;
For oh, to-day the breezes say
My own love comes, and comes apace !

Chorus of Fays. { Love has wings, and o'er the sea
Home he brings a voice to thee ;
Swift across the snowy main,
" I am coming, love, again ! "



III.—THE FAIRY QUEEN.

HASTE thee, Sybil, pluck the flower
Ere thy Robin comes again ;
Seek it in its verdant bower,
Let it hide itself in vain.
Swift through every dell and dingle,
Where it makes its mossy home,
Where the lea and brooklet mingle,
Haste thee, maiden, haste and roam !

For if thou dost not possess it,
Who can tell but others may ?
Seek it now, O maid, unless it
Steal thy Robin's heart away !
He is fair, and many lasses
Would esteem him passing well ;
Dally not, the time swift passes,
Seek it out in dale and dell !

IV.—THE QUEST.

O'er the smiling meadows
Trips a maiden fair ;
Life has many shadows,
Falling everywhere,
But within her bosom
All is joy to-day,
For the magic blossom
Frightens Care away.
By the silver river,
And the rippling brook,
Where the willows quiver,
Doth that maiden look.
Thro' the hardy bramble,
With its spiky thorn,
In her floral ramble
Is that maiden borne.
Over banks of mosses
Swift her glance is thrown,
Where the spring embosses
Jewels of its own !
But in vain her mission,
She must give it o'er ;
Sad is her contrition
She'd not sought before.
Homeward she is wending,
Stealing is the tear,
When the unpretending
Flow ret doth appear.
With a sigh of pleasure,
From a shelter'd nook,
That sweet floral treasure
Swift the maiden took.
"Ah ! at last I've found it,
Joy indeed is mine ;
May the spell around it
Two fond hearts entwine !"

V.—THE FAYS' FAREWELL.

Farewell ! farewell !
Our task is o'er ;
Sweet maiden, rest in peace.
Thou hast the spell
That will insure
His love shall never cease.

Care not for smart
Of piercing thorn,
Tho' sharp and sore its pain ;
A loving heart
To-day is borne
To thee across the main.

Farewell ! farewell !
The flower is thine,
And sweet its charm to thee ;
Its gentle spell
Shall e'er entwine
That heart across the sea.

EDWARD OXENFORD.





SPRING FLOWERS.

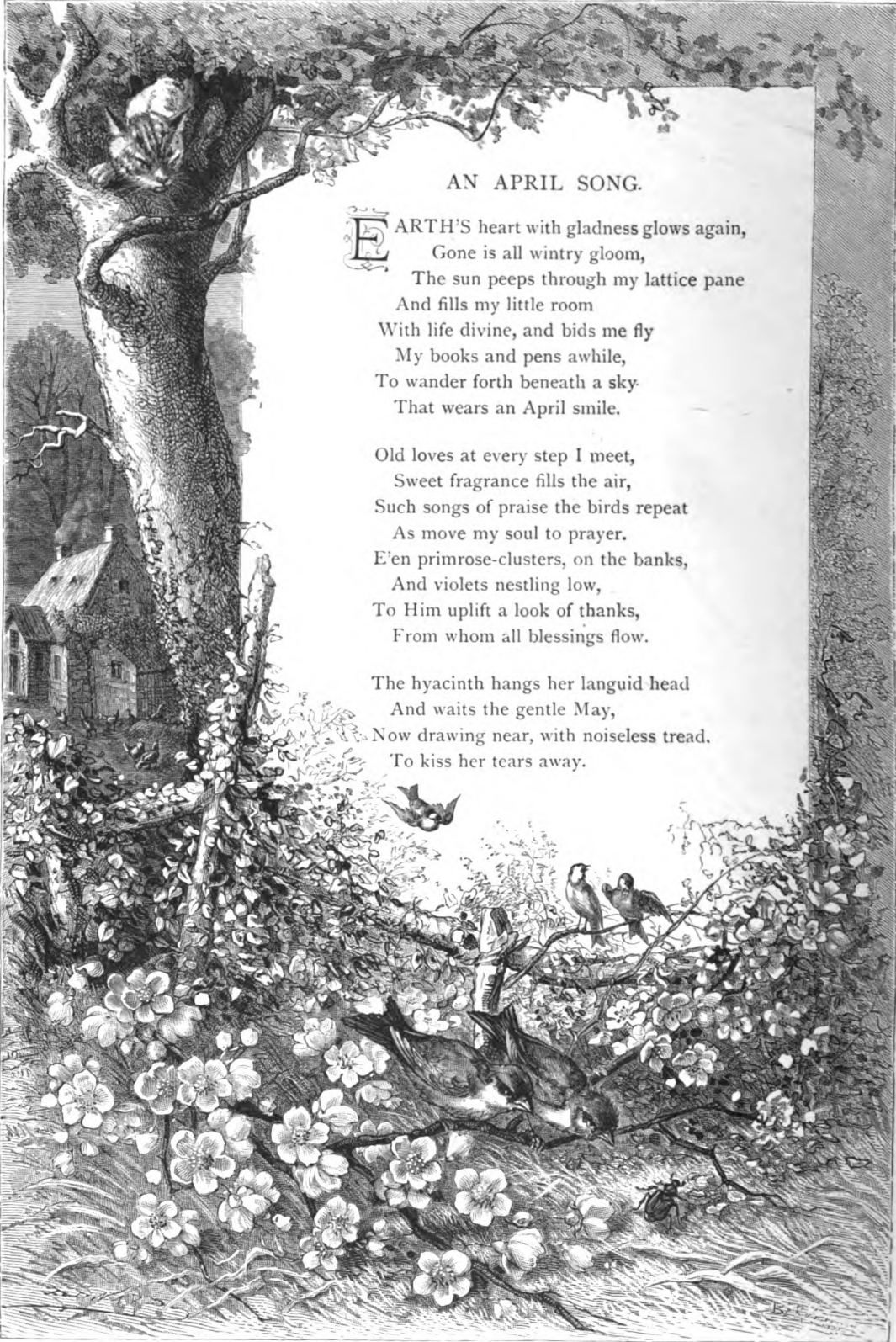
UP through the wrinkled and naked earth,
 Tenderly sweet, tenderly fair,
 Crocuses blossom, snowdrops peep,
 Shyly, modestly, everywhere ;
 Pale and purple violets creep,
 Filling with too much sweet the air ;
 Blue-bells nod, and daffodils stare ;
 Under the moss the hyacinths sleep,
 And dream not of sorrow or care,
 Waiting, waiting for summer's birth.
 Deep in each dell and mossy vale,
 Lifts up the orchis her curious crown ;
 Lovingly peeps the primrose pale
 At the cowslips, golden, orange and brown.

The hedges are whitening for May,
 Where the fragrant, vagrant dog-rose blushes,
 And winter has passed away,
 When the bindweed peers through the bushes !
 All nature is smiling to-day,
 As the breath of the spring time flushes,
 As the blushing buds from the apple-trees
 fall ;
 And the flaunting flag-flower, stately and tall,
 With the water-lily, queen o' them all,

Bloom down by the reeds and the rushes.
 The hawthorn scatters her petals fair,
 The lilac sighs to the sleepy air,
 The golden laburnums quiver ;
 The chestnut spreads out his stately arms,
 Bending beneath his leafy charms,
 And blossoms over the river ;
 And the waters murmur as they steal by,
 And west winds whisper and south winds sigh,
 Oh ! that the spring time could last for ever.



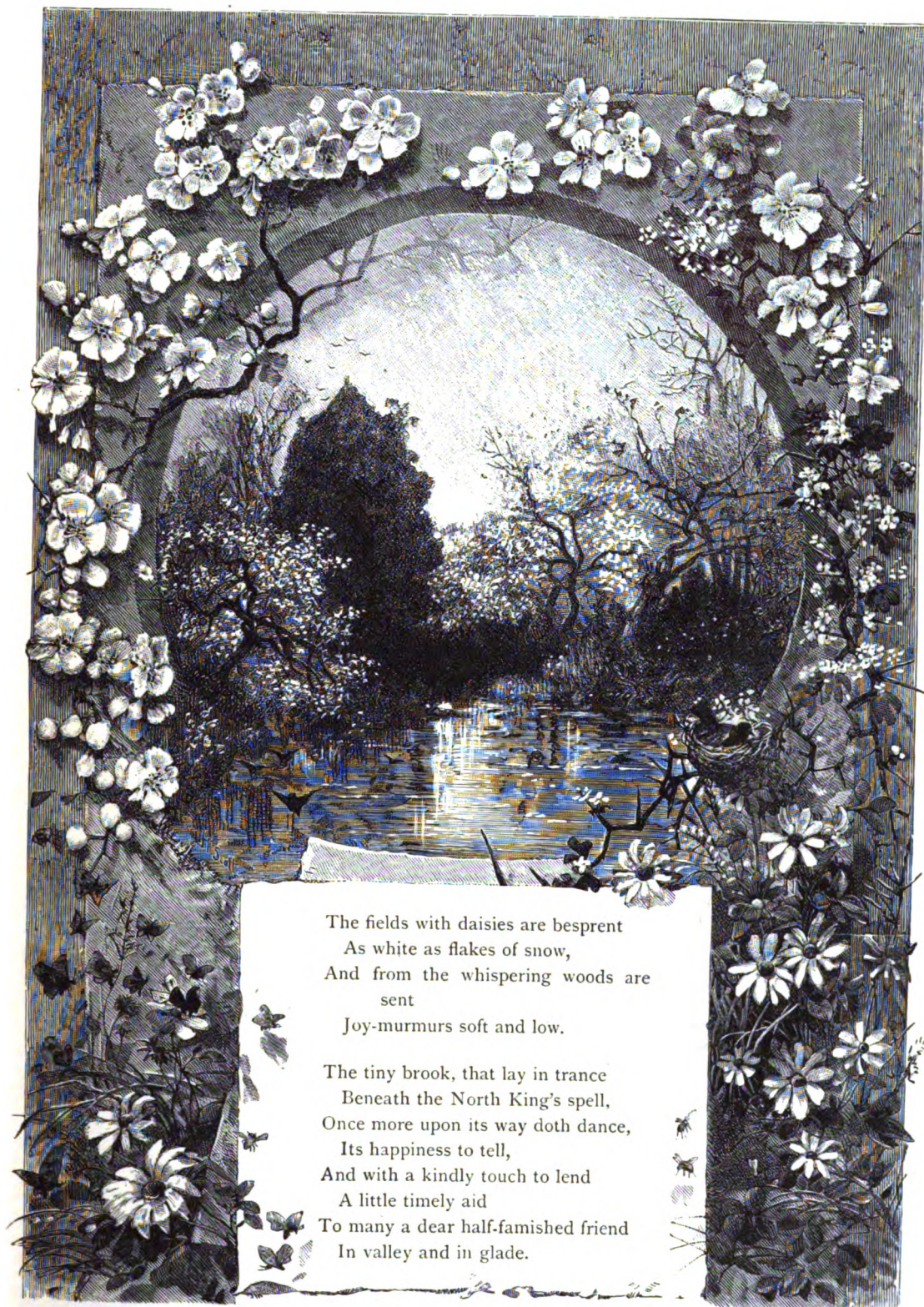
AN APRIL SONG.



EARTH'S heart with gladness glows again,
Gone is all wintry gloom,
The sun peeps through my lattice pane
And fills my little room
With life divine, and bids me fly
My books and pens awhile,
To wander forth beneath a sky
That wears an April smile.

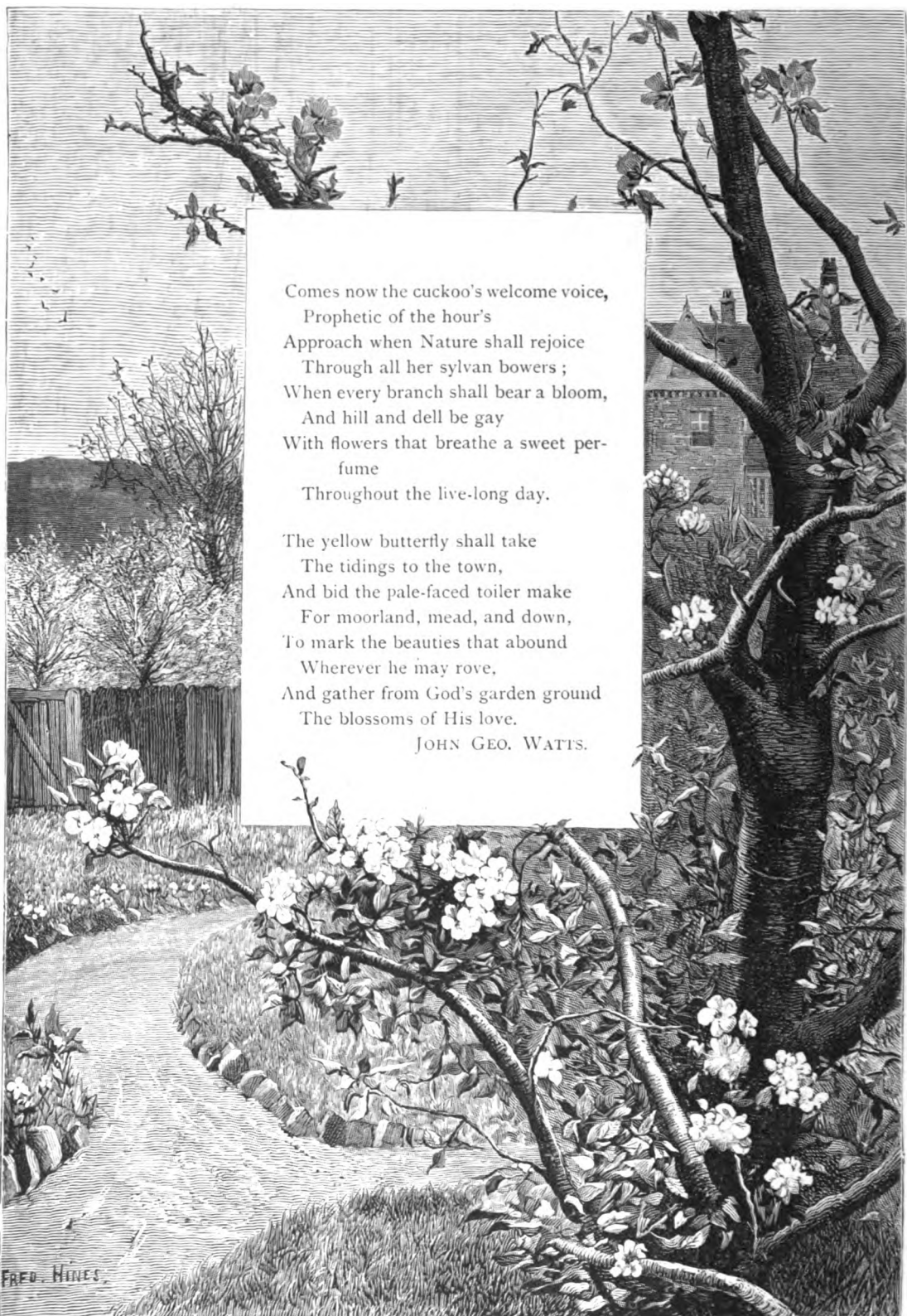
Old loves at every step I meet,
Sweet fragrance fills the air,
Such songs of praise the birds repeat
As move my soul to prayer.
E'en primrose-clusters, on the banks,
And violets nestling low,
To Him uplift a look of thanks,
From whom all blessings flow.

The hyacinth hangs her languid head
And waits the gentle May,
Now drawing near, with noiseless tread,
To kiss her tears away.



The fields with daisies are besprent
As white as flakes of snow,
And from the whispering woods are sent
Joy-murmurs soft and low.

The tiny brook, that lay in trance
Beneath the North King's spell,
Once more upon its way doth dance,
Its happiness to tell,
And with a kindly touch to lend
A little timely aid
To many a dear half-famished friend
In valley and in glade.



Comes now the cuckoo's welcome voice,
Prophetic of the hour's
Approach when Nature shall rejoice
Through all her sylvan bowers ;
When every branch shall bear a bloom,
And hill and dell be gay
With flowers that breathe a sweet per-
fume
Throughout the live-long day.

The yellow butterfly shall take
The tidings to the town,
And bid the pale-faced toiler make
For moorland, mead, and down,
To mark the beauties that abound
Wherever he may rove,
And gather from God's garden ground
The blossoms of His love.

JOHN GEO. WATTS.

FRED. HINES

LOVE'S-ACRE.

BEFORE the spring is well abreak
 The cherries there are blooming,
 The hawthorn marvels half awake,
 Its starry coat assuming ;
 Japonica the garden hath,
 And in the healthy meadows
 Sweet, the shy daisy skirts the path
 And glorifies the shadows.

About the hedge the "devil's-rope"
 Forbears its deadly creeping,
 And like the growth of golden hope
 The buttercups are heaping ;
 The sliding efts atop the pool
 Are often caught a-breathing,
 And often have I found the mole
 His stealthy body sheathing.

And why all this? Oh, hear the thrush
 On yonder oak a-trilling,
 He'll tell thee of a darling—hush !
 His little throat is swelling :
 "To Luluah' my song is named,
 Can ye its wording render ?
 What, no ! They are not to be blamed,
 Mine old friend, true and tender.

"They have not watched, as you and I,
 A patient time together,
 To hear a footstep by-and-by,
 And thrill to see a feather ;
 They know a thousand flowers flame
 By lawn and dene and dingle,
 But one, the fairest of them, fame
 Leaves unobserved and single."

B. C.

WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN.

HAVE you forgotten, little wife,
Our far-off childhood's golden life?
Our splendid castles on the sands,
The boat I made with my own hands,

The dreams we had ! the songs we made !
The sunshine ! and the woven shade !
The tears of many a sad good-bye,
When we were parted, you and I !



The rain that caught us in the wood,
The cakes we had when we were good,
The doll I broke and made you cry,
When we were children, you and I !

Have you forgotten, little wife,
The dawning of that other life ?
The strange new light the whole world wore,
When life love's perfect blossom bore !

Ah, nay ! your loving heart, I know,
Remembers still the long-ago ;
It is the light of childhood's days
That shines through all your winning ways.

God grant we ne'er forget our youth,
Its innocence, and faith, and truth,
The smiles, the tears, and hopes gone by.
When we were children, you and I.

FREDERICK E. WEATHERLY.

THE LITTLE SKIPPER AND HIS WIFE.

THEY sat together, a little pair, in an old hull by the sea—
She was a maiden with golden hair, and a
brave bright boy was he.
“I’m the skipper,” he cries, “and you’re my wife,
and over the sea we’ll go!”
He cuts the rope with his little knife—and the
evening sun is low.



Uprose the storm, uproared the tide; the boat
was filling fast.
The little wife clung to her skipper’s side, and
wept at the sea and blast.
He wraps her warm in his little coat; he cries,
“O, weep not so!”
As swift they drift in the filling boat—and the
stormy sun is low.



O, what shall be their parents’ life in their cabins
on the shore?
The little skipper and his wife will come to them
no more.
O, lonely will they wander by, and watch the ebb
and flow,
And deem they hear their children’s cry, when the
crimson sun is low.



THE JOY OF LIFE.

LIFE is a very joyous thing,
 Whatever we at times may say !
 The youthful freshness of the spring
 Must drive the winter gloom away,
 And usher in the summer day,
 Till with the birds perforce we sing—
 "Life is indeed a joyous thing !"

Life is a very joyous thing !
 Though snows may hide the flowers from
 sight,
 The young year very soon will bring
 Her loveliest blossoms, pure as light,
 Children of winter, snowy-white,
 And fill our souls with hope, and sing—
 "Life is indeed a joyous thing !"

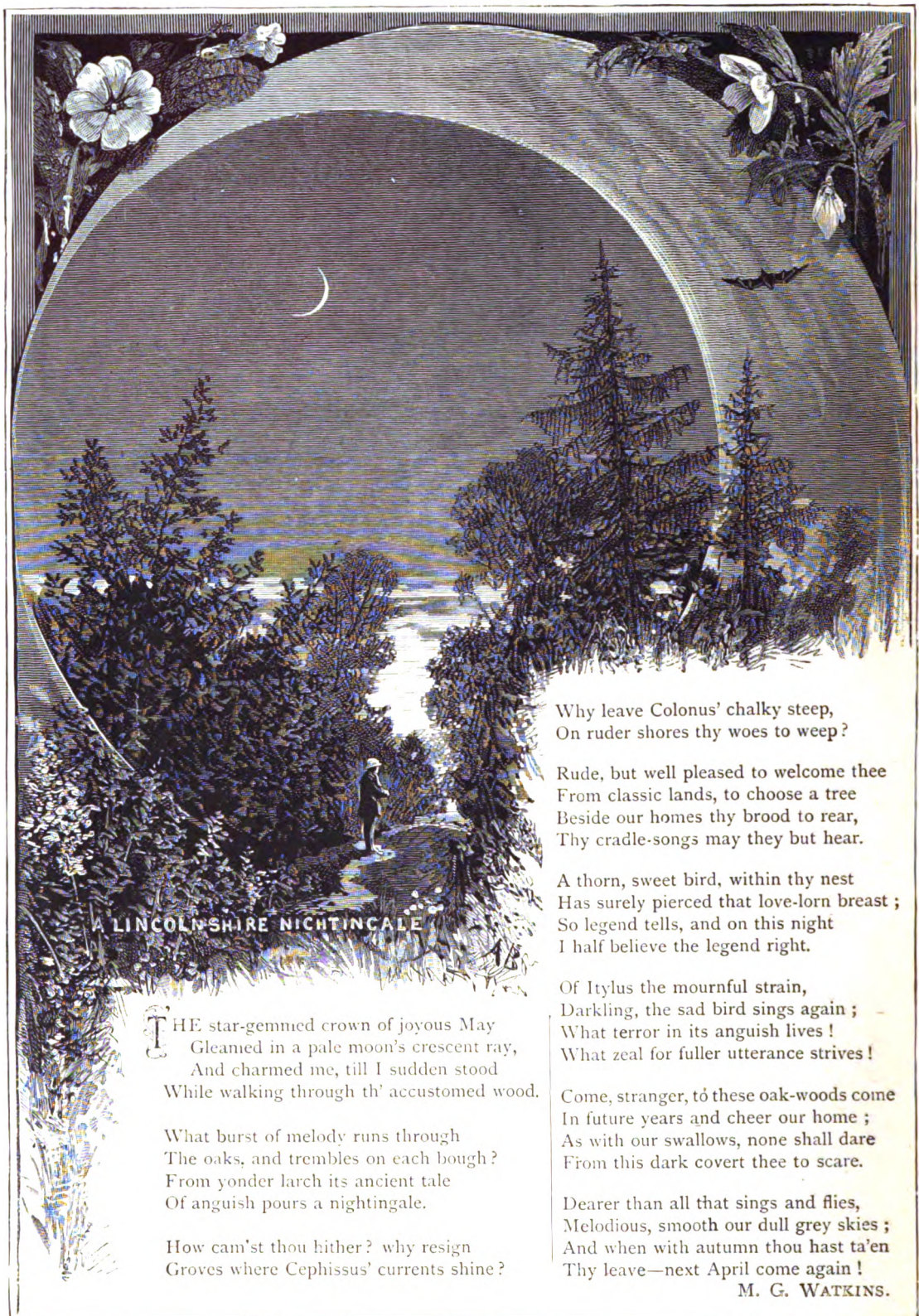
Life is a very joyous thing !
 Its good is often hard to find,
 Its pleasures fly on rapid wing,
 Its honours vary with the wind ;
 Yet still we see, unless we're blind,

A hundred reasons why
we sing—
“Life is indeed a joyous thing!”

Life is a very joyous thing!
Though, one by one, we lose each friend,
To love and hope we still may cling;
And if we, like the rushes, bend,
No blow will kill, and till the end
Through good and ill we still
shall sing—
“Life is a very joyous
thing!”

G. W.





A LINCOLNSHIRE NIGHTINGALE

THE star-gemmed crown of joyous May
Gleaned in a pale moon's crescent ray,
And charmed me, till I sudden stood
While walking through th' accustomed wood.

What burst of melody runs through
The oaks, and trembles on each bough?
From yonder larch its ancient tale
Of anguish pours a nightingale.

How cam'st thou hither? why resign
Groves where Cephissus' currents shine?

Why leave Colonus' chalky steep,
On ruder shores thy woes to weep?

Rude, but well pleased to welcome thee
From classic lands, to choose a tree
Beside our homes thy brood to rear,
Thy cradle-songs may they but hear.

A thorn, sweet bird, within thy nest
Has surely pierced that love-lorn breast;
So legend tells, and on this night
I half believe the legend right.

Of Itylus the mournful strain,
Darkling, the sad bird sings again;
What terror in its anguish lives!
What zeal for fuller utterance strives!

Come, stranger, to these oak-woods come
In future years and cheer our home;
As with our swallows, none shall dare
From this dark covert thee to scare.

Dearer than all that sings and flies,
Melodious, smooth our dull grey skies;
And when with autumn thou hast ta'en
Thy leave—next April come again!

M. G. WATKINS.



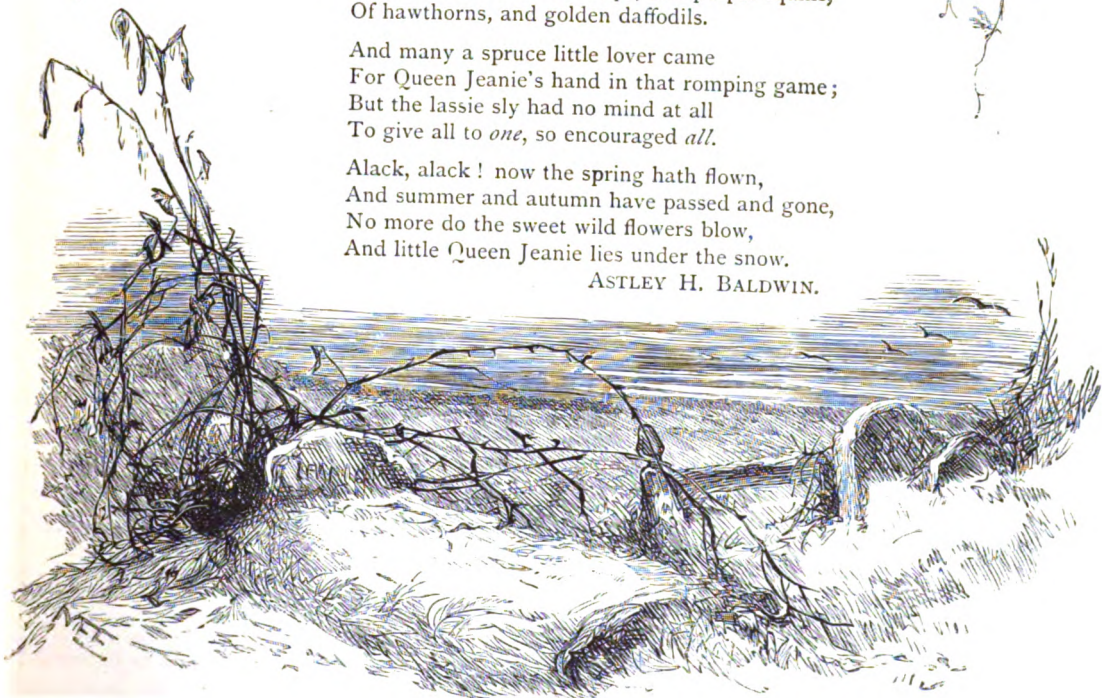
LITTLE QUEEN JEANIE.

LITTLE Queen Jeanie was Queen of the May,
 Pretty looked little Queen Jean that day,
 With a crown of cowslips, and purple squills,
 Of hawthorns, and golden daffodils.

And many a spruce little lover came
 For Queen Jeanie's hand in that romping game;
 But the lassie sly had no mind at all
 To give all to *one*, so encouraged *all*.

Alack, alack! now the spring hath flown,
 And summer and autumn have passed and gone,
 No more do the sweet wild flowers blow,
 And little Queen Jeanie lies under the snow.

ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.





A "school"* of mackerel at last !
 Fling hand-lines o'er the lee !
 The *Sea-Lark* scuds with groaning mast,
 And winds that follow free.

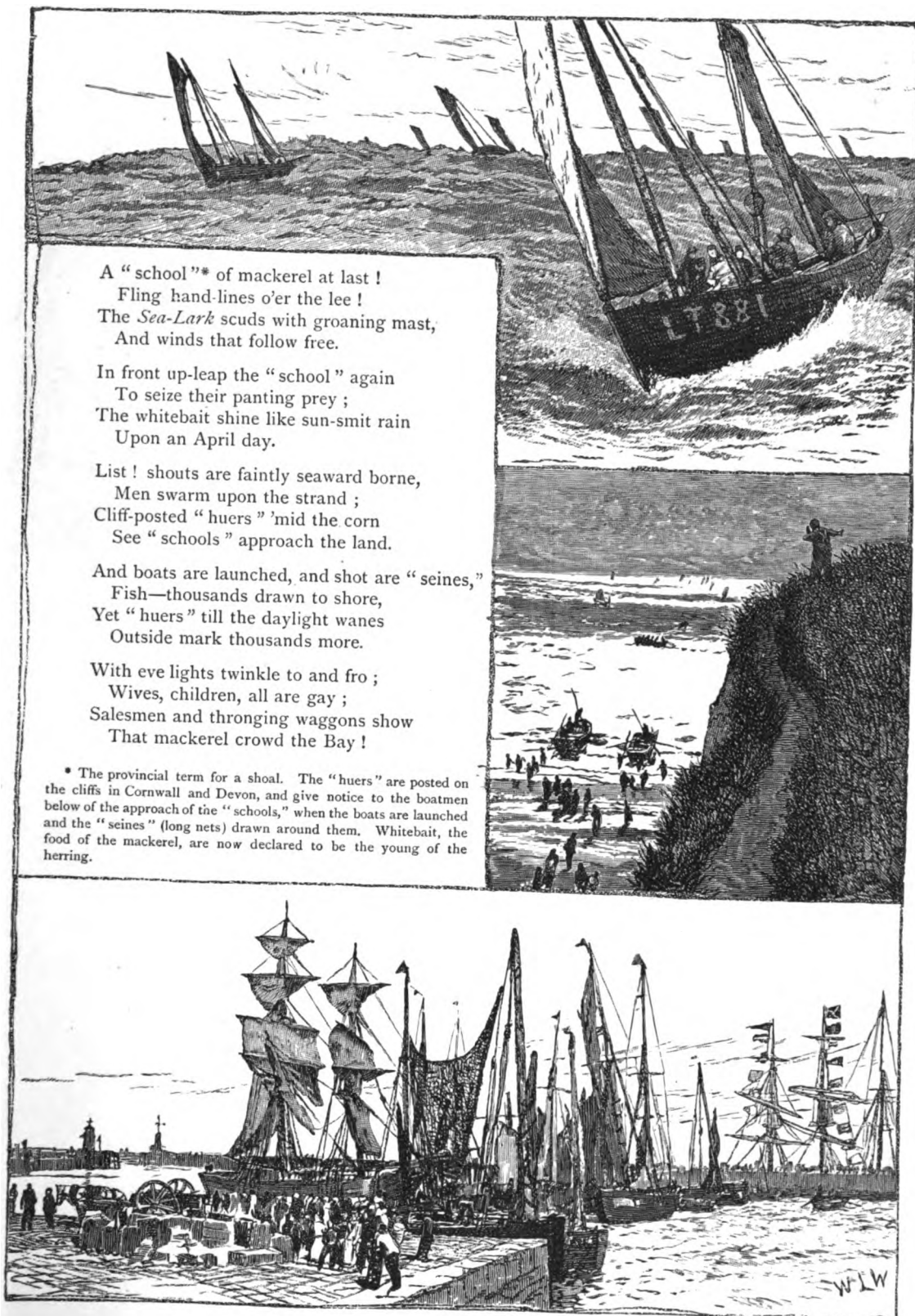
In front up-leap the "school" again
 To seize their panting prey ;
 The whitebait shine like sun-smit rain
 Upon an April day.

List ! shouts are faintly seaward borne,
 Men swarm upon the strand ;
 Cliff-posted "huers" 'mid the corn
 See "schools" approach the land.

And boats are launched, and shot are "seines,"
 Fish—thousands drawn to shore,
 Yet "huers" till the daylight wanes
 Outside mark thousands more.

With eve lights twinkle to and fro ;
 Wives, children, all are gay ;
 Salesmen and thronging waggons show
 That mackerel crowd the Bay !

* The provincial term for a shoal. The "huers" are posted on the cliffs in Cornwall and Devon, and give notice to the boatmen below of the approach of the "schools," when the boats are launched and the "seines" (long nets) drawn around them. Whitebait, the food of the mackerel, are now declared to be the young of the herring.



THE FALSE & THE TRUE

I.

Down by a little pebbly brook,
Whose wavelets laughing fancies took,
And o'er the stones went skipping,
Two little children, boy and girl,
With sun-browned cheek and tangled curl,
Came tripping.

As, boy and girl-like, on they passed
Where giant boughs deep shadows cast,
Hand clasping hand so tightly,
Said he at length, "O little love,
I love you all the world above!"
Full lightly.

And she, in all her love for him,
Not seeing that his love was dim,
But trusting him full surely,
Looked up with eyes of heaven's blue,
While ripe lips whispered, "I love you,"
Demurely.



II.

The silent years had flitted fast,
And once again the maiden passed,
The brookside pathway taking;
And as of old the wavelets played,
And little circling eddies made,
O'er smooth-worn pebbles breaking.

And as the maiden lingering stood,
A picture of sweet womanhood,
Pure, true, and tender-hearted,
She heard the voice she loved so well
To other ears its love-tale tell,
The tale of days departed.

"O love," it said, "O little love,
I love you all the world above!"
Sweet story olden never!
But the little maiden's dream had fled,
Her loving trust lay cold and dead,
For ever and for ever.

And though that sweet pure-hearted one
Might still find love beneath the sun,
That would desert her never,
She lets it pass without regret,
For while some whisper and forget,
True love loves on for ever.

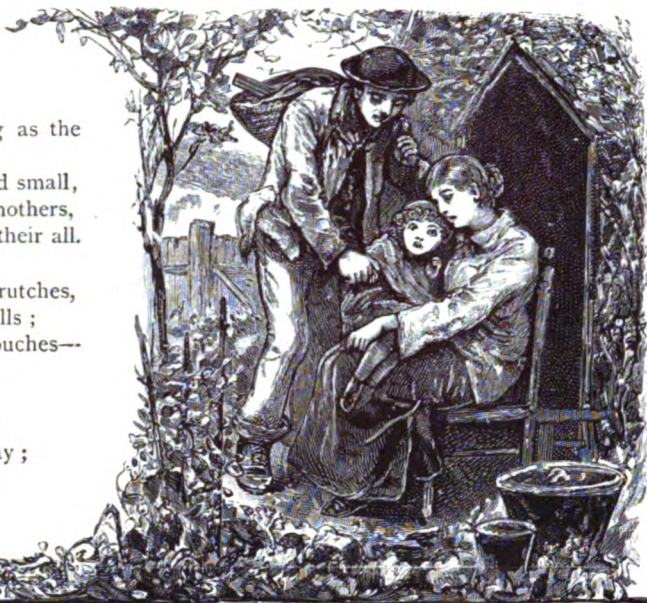
G. WEATHERLY.

A LITTLE CRIPPLE.

THOUGH he was not sturdy or strong as the others,
 And aged before boyhood, decrepit and small,
 Such depth hath the yearning of fathers and mothers,
 They loved him at home, as their treasure, their all.

A cripple past hope, he was doomed to bear crutches,
 And life promised nought save a burden of ills ;
 Yet his eyes had the light which softens and touches—
 The look of the reindeer at bay on the hills.

He wistfully noted the sports and the gambols
 His brothers and sisters enjoyed the long day ;
 Alas ! not for him were the races and rambles
 In the meadows so near, yet so far away !



For the sun might shine brightly, and breezes
 breathe mellow,
 And earth laugh to scorn the dull thoughts of the
 sage ;
 Like some sad pining bird, this poor little fellow
 Drank in the glad life through the bars of a cage.

But days dawning sadly, and dimming so slowly,
 Were brightened at least by affection's true worth ;
 For the love that all bore him was pure and was holy,
 The love that can make a sweet garden of earth.

And when at His beck'ning this child and this cripple
 Was summoned where sorrow and death hold no place,
 The close of his life seemed the close of a ripple,
 So peaceful the look on the wan little face !

How vain then the thought that His mercy is narrow,
 How empty the doubt of the "sceptical mind" !
 Each day brings its crumb for the snow-frozen sparrow,
 And love for the helpless, the halt, and the blind !

REGINALD BARNETT.

A PASTORAL SONG.

WHERE, in a meadow bright with dew,
 A little brooklet wanders through,
 And the soft breeze sweet echo
 brings,
 A shepherd tends his sheep and sings :—

And carols forth his song, but seems
 To echo thy sweet voice, my love !

“ Down in the brook when wavelets beat
 In gentle ripples 'gainst a stone,



“ O little love ! where'er the place,
 I dream of thee through all the hours ;
 Deep in the cups of dewy flowers
 Bright fancy weaves for me thy face.
 “ The lark that soars far up above
 The meadows and the babbling streams,

I think, my love, of thee alone,
 And hear the murmur of thy feet.

“ And as I lie among the flowers,
 There's nought, my love, but tells of thee ;
 And, lulled by all sweet melody,
 I dream and while away the hours.”



THE SUMMER OF LIFE



WHEN dragon-flies skim swiftly o'er the mere,
 And new-fledged birds essay their wings in flight ;
 When forest trees shut out the sun's fierce light ;
 When high above the nodding grass you hear
 The skylark's joyous carol, sweet and clear ;
 When poppies throng amid the ripening wheat,
 And all the busy air is still with heat—
 Then is the wondrous Summer of the year.

And when Life's struggle has been well begun,
 And men and women gladly take their place,
 And boldly strive for mastery in the race ;
 When youths and maidens join their hands to run,
 And infant smiles give strength to persevere—
 Then is the Summer of Life's changing year.

JUNE MEMORIES.

NOW, dame, the morn doth promise fair,
 'Tis kind and genial weather,
 So prithee quit that easy chair,
 And let us forth together.

The merry month of June is here,
 Adorning briar and bramble;
 Come, slip your bonnet on, my dear,
 And join me in a ramble.

I well recall that happy day
 When, through the green lanes straying,
 I met a little maiden gay
 And went with her a-maying.
 She was but ten, and I no more,
 Her cheeks were round and rosy,
 And in her white-bibbed pinafore
 She wore a pretty posy.



She tripped so daintily along,
 And prattled on so cheerly,
 I heeded not the skylark's song,
 Although I loved that dearly.
 There was a music in her voice,
 So witching, so entrancing,
 It made my inmost heart rejoice
 And set my pulses dancing.

Obedient to her commands,
 I dared the thorniest hedges,
 And scratched and tore my face and hands
 In climbing banks and ledges,
 To win a spray of hawthorn bloom—
 Nor deemed the task a labour—
 Or cull some flower whose sweet perfume
 Endear'd it to my neighbour.



And here we gathered at our will
The rarest flowers a-blowing,
And gold and silver heaped until
'Twas time we should be going.
Then as we bore our wealth away,
We chanted to the wild wood,
As I remember, many a lay
Dear to the heart of childhood.

Since then, dear dame—there, do not sigh—
We've lived and loved together
For threescore years, or very nigh,
Enjoying fairish weather.
Now travelling down the vale of life,
We've little cause for sorrow—
A happy husband, happy wife,
With trust in our to-morrow.

At last we reached a quiet nook
(Beside a hazel cover
And watered by a babbling brook)
With blossoms sprinkled over
In such profusion and so rare,
Our souls were filled with pleasure ;
Departing Spring had emptied there
Her lap of half its treasure.



A SONG OF A LEAF.

I FLUNG a leaf on a summer stream,
That I plucked from the alder-tree ;
And I watched it dance in the sunny beam,
Where the eddies played ripplingly.
“Oh ! for a life like the leaf,” I cried,
“Floating along on the sunlit tide.”

Over the water came a breeze,
And it hurried the leaf along ;
Down to the margin stooped the trees,

And they whispered a gentle song.
“Oh ! for a life like the leaf,” I cried,
“Ever in sunshine and song to glide.”

Fast sped the leaf on its joyous way,
Till it reached the rocks in the river ;
Over the ledge, amid foam and spray,
Went the leaf—and was lost for ever.
“Ah, me ! Is life like the leaf ?” I cried—
“*Like the leaf,*” the echoing rocks replied.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

I FLOATED down the stream at eventide,
And heard a nightingale in distant tree
Wooing his mate with wondrous melody ;
Full long I listened rapt, and then I tried
To weave the passionate notes in song, but sighed
To find how cold my own love-lay must be,
With scarce a murmur of the harmony

Poured forth in ceaseless strain on every side.
But when I showed my love, with conscious shame,
My feeble rendering of the wild bird's song,
A tender light shone in her eyes down-bent,
For to her ears a glad full echo came
Of the sweet songster's lay, and lingered long,
And thrilled her heart with loving wonderment
G. WEATHERLY.







MIDSUMMER



GENEROUS sun from cloudless skies
 Looks down on valley, mead, and grove,
 And from the waving corn-fields rise
 Sounds like the whisperings of love,
 The hill-born streamlet brawls no more,
 Nor dances o'er its pebbly bed,
 But dreamily along its shore
 Creeps like a golden thread.

And dappled kine from grassy leas,
 With grave and philosophic air,
 Their thirsty longings to appease,
 Towards its sedgy marge repair.
 And clinging to its friendly banks,
 The bright forget-me-not appears,
 Her grateful hands outstretched in thanks,
 Her blue eyes glad to tears.



The birds, so loud of voice when spring
 Told winter it was time to flee,
 In more subdued numbers sing,
 But with a fuller melody ;
 The bough that prophesied in May,
 With clust'ring blossoms fresh and fair,
 Fulfils its promises to-day
 In fruitage rich and rare.

And one whom, lightsome as a fawn,
 I first beheld in childhood's hours,
 Tripping across a verdant lawn
 In quest of red-lipped daisy flowers,
 Moves slower now, but with a grace
 Fully as winsome, while I find
 A higher beauty in her face,
 Dear mirror of her mind.

The arms that clasped her in her youth,
 As fondly fold her in her prime,
 And steadfast as eternal truth
 Her love-lamp burns its light sublime,
 And, garnered in my inmost heart,
 The harvests of full twenty years
 Of constancy to me impart
 A feast that ever cheers.



THE QUEST OF THE ROSE.

AN OLD MIDSUMMER EVE LOVE-SPELL.

I.—MIDSUMMER EVE.

Sweet-scented June ! with fragrant hay
About the new-mown meadow tossed,
Where lad and lass turn work to play
Upon a summer holiday,
And hearts are won and lost.

When fairies dance in magic rings
All underneath the summer moon,
And weird St. John's Wort answer brings
To maids whose sweet belief still clings
To old-world spells in June.

When sun in summer solstice glows,
And bonfires flash from hill to hill,
And maidens seek the magic rose,
Then in awed silence seek repose,
The while the world is still.

Hence reddening blaze on distant height,
Each lovelorn wight looks fondly on,
As ushering in the blessed night
Whereon to practise mystic rite,
The Eve of good St. John.



II.—IN THE HAYFIELD.

Bashful Colin all the day
Nigh sweet Phebe lingers ;
Turns for her the half-tanned hay
Lest she tire her fingers.

Scarce a word he dares to speak,
Frowning answer fearing ;
Crimson glows his sunburnt cheek
When her voice he's hearing.

Phebe, with well-feigned disdain
Out beyond him glancing,
Pouts her lips ; though love's sweet pain
Sets her heart a-dancing.

Stupid Colin turns away,
Ne'er the truth divining ;
Dark and clouded grows the day,
Though the sun is shining.

So two foolish hearts aside
May turn Love's smiling river,
Knowing not but that its tide
May flow away for ever.

III.—OBERON.

Through the forest, by the river,
Lo, the fairy torches quiver;
Oberon in state is sitting,
Darting fireflies round him flitting;
By his side
His fairy bride;
And the nightingale is singing;
And the lily-bells are ringing;
Fairy trumpets gaily pealing;
Fairy music softly stealing
Underneath the night-blue ceiling,
Patined with gold stars a-shining
Through the moss-set branches twining,
Leaf and stem with lamps a-glow
That the glittering glow-worms show.
Acorn-cup with nectar filled,
Takes the Elf-king in his hand;
Greets he first his queen self-willed;
Greets he next the fairy band;
Drinks he, "To each mortal lover!"—
"Fairy subjects, prove your power;
Round the magic roses hover,
Lend enchantment to each flower.
Give the lover courage true,
That his heart no more despair;
Dry the maiden's eyes of blue,
Wrinkles smooth from foreheads fair.
Fairy subjects, prove your might
In the rare midsummer night."



IV.—GATHERING THE ROSE.

Nigh a cottage blooms a garden
Where the roses blow.
In the garden 'mongst the roses,
In the silver glow
Of the moonlight, stands a maiden
Glancing not to left or right,
Backward moves she 'mongst the roses
Rival-streaked or red or white;
Moss-veiled roses, maiden-blush-rose—
Surely this the magic flower;
Trembl'ng snatches she a blossom
In the lonely midnight hour.
To her lips the rose she presses,
Silently doth own,
In her heart for aye and ever
Colin reigns alone.
Silent still—the rose she layeth
All in folds of white;
Mortal eye must not behold it
Until Christmas night.
Then if fresh the rose is blowing,
Colin will be true;
And he'll take from her the blossom,
And she'll smile anew.
And no more with coy deceiving
Will she mar her bliss;
Colin, bolder grown, his thieving
Crowns with loving kiss.
So she muses, never speaking,
While the moonlight pale
In and out among the roses
Weaves a silver veil.
Silent still—her couch now seeking
She in slumber lies.
Who can tell the love-sweet visions
That her sleep-sealed eyes
See amongst the fadeless roses,
That her spell-bound dream discloses
In a fairy Paradise?

V.—FAIRY SERENADE.

Sleep, maiden, sleep!
We guard the rose,
And safe will keep
It from all foes.
No cankerworm nor cruel blight
Shall harm the blossom plucked to-night.
Sleep, maiden, sleep!
Sleep, maiden, sleep!
We guard the rose;
Though skies may weep,
Though rough wind blows,
When Christmas snow lies on the ground,
Thy rose shall fresh and fair be found.
Sleep, maiden, sleep!
Sleep, maiden, sleep!
Whilst visions bright
Entrancing creep
Round thee to-night;
Yet sweeter shall the moment be
When Colin takes the rose from thee.
Sleep, maiden, sleep!

JULIA GODDARD.





SHADOWS.

SEE the shadows on the meadows
Of the clouds that stain the azure
Over-head !

What a quaking now they're making
On the bosom of the river,
All the shimmer and the glimmer
Of it fled ;
And its glassy surface broken
Into ripples, that betoken,

Though unheard, a shadow's tread.
Now once more they reach the shore,
Bearing to the panting sheep
Pleasant coolness as they sweep

O'er the grass :

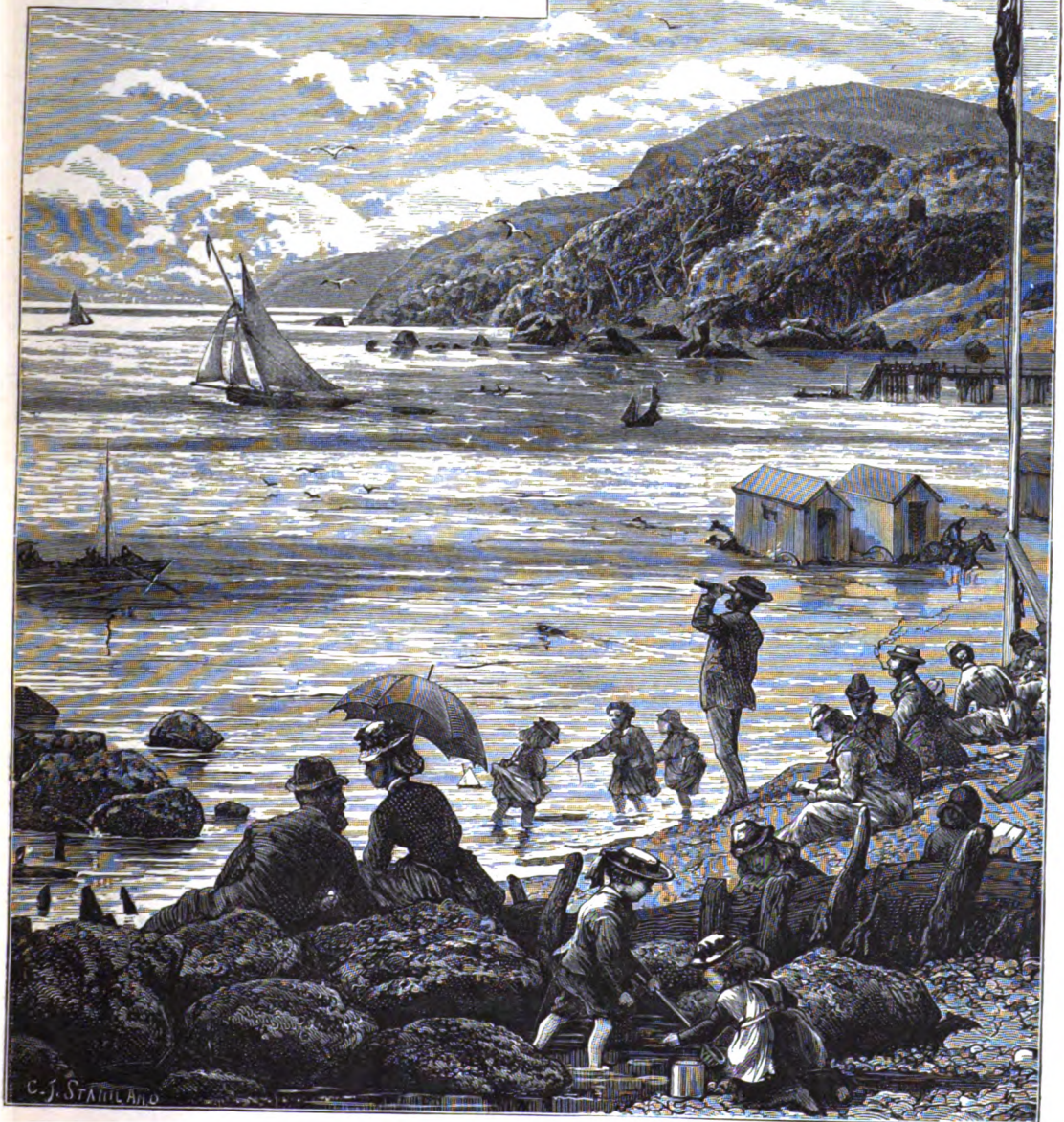
But the tender flowers, beneath
The influence of their chilly breath,
Close their petals as they pass.
Whether giving pain or pleasure,
They have not a moment's leisure
To consider in their flight ;
But remorseless as the fate
That doth on man and woman wait,
On they rush across the plain,
Trailing after them a train
Of golden light.

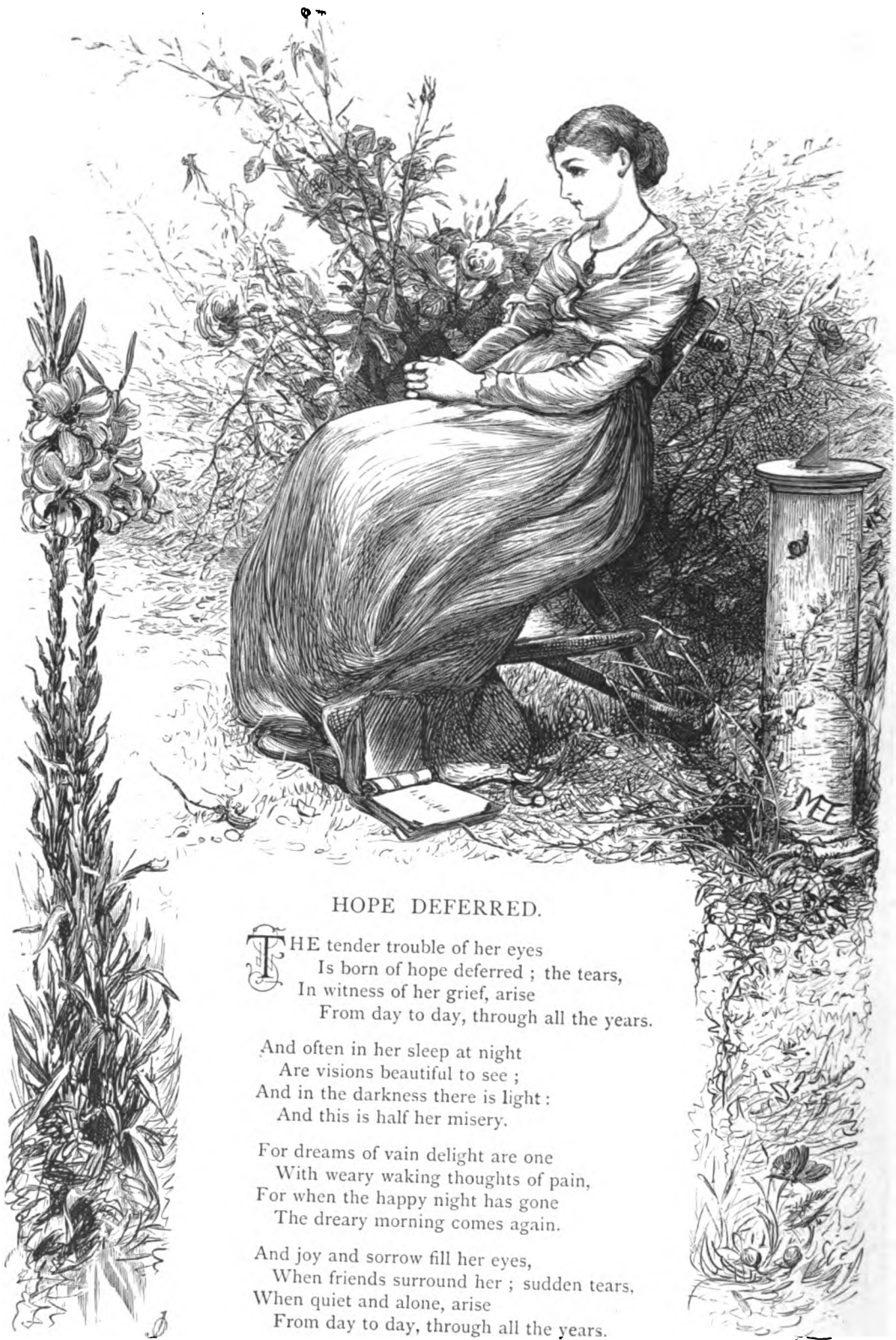
Now at length the clouds' resistance
The sun hath broken through ;
And the shadows faster flying,
Fade across the landscape, dying
From our vision in the distance,
And the sky again is blue.

PERFECT SUMMER: A SEASIDE SCENE.

A SONNET.

THE twinkling sea looks like a maiden sleeping,
 With countless diamonds sparkling on her breast;
 Children from bathing-wains are quaintly leaping,
 While on the sands their watchful guardians rest;
 The sloping banks, in richest foliage drest,
 Are glassed in bays below; the slow wave creeping
 Comes towards our feet; while clouds, in order keeping
 (Like fleecy swans that, with their graceful breast,
 Of inland waters cleave the tranquil tide),
 O'er heaven's blue ocean march in grand array;
 Skiffs, boats, and snow-white yachts before us glide;
 The sound of music comes across the bay;
 Earth, sea, and sky, in prospect far and wide,
 Harmonious blend, this live-long summer day.





HOPE DEFERRED.

THE tender trouble of her eyes
 Is born of hope deferred ; the tears,
 In witness of her grief, arise
 From day to day, through all the years.

And often in her sleep at night
 Are visions beautiful to see ;
 And in the darkness there is light :
 And this is half her misery.

For dreams of vain delight are one
 With weary waking thoughts of pain,
 For when the happy night has gone
 The dreary morning comes again.

And joy and sorrow fill her eyes,
 When friends surround her ; sudden tears,
 When quiet and alone, arise
 From day to day, through all the years.



WAITING.

THE rose he plucked, when first we met,
 To set and fasten in my hair—
 The faded rose is treasured yet :
 And hope is stronger than despair.

The lips of love will not betray,
 Though hope should strive with many fears ;
 The heart of love, from day to day,
 Is changeless through the changing years.

We live in hope—we trust and wait :
 The stars that glitter through the night
 Will faint and fail ; the golden gate
 Of morning will disclose the light.

The rose he gave, when first we met,
 To blush with beauty in my hair—
 The withered rose is treasured yet :
 And hope is stronger than despair.

CROWNED IN SUMMER.

A MORN when quivering lights and shadows fall
 Athwart the fair luxuriance of the trees ;
 A morn when summer voices lightly call,
 And come and go with every passing breeze ;
 When bees about the clover hum a tune,
 And idle streamlets purl a listless song for June.

A morn when all the hedgerows glimmer white
 With summer snow, scattered by hawthorn flowers ;
 A morn when Nature trembles with delight,
 And Love is lingering in the golden hours,
 And hiding 'mongst the purple shades that lie
 Where the dim forest fringes meet the bending sky.

Fair Lettice from her morning dreams awoke,
 And lo, her heart was softly murmuring
 An echoing joy, that into rapture broke
 As she the casement open wide did fling,
 And felt the balmy air, whose sweet perfume,
 From dewy flowers distilled, as incense filled the room.

Lettice was dwelling in a golden land,
 Bright with warm sunshine, where a monarch
 reigned
 Despotic ; yet so loved was his command,
 Each despotism fresh devotion gained ;
 And each new chain her king about her cast
 Seemed forged of purest gold, more precious than the
 last.

She looked into her mirror, where she saw
 A young face flushed and fair as fair might be ;
 And thinking of her king, and his sweet law,
 She wondered if a queen he there might see ;
 And so a-dreaming still she hummed a song
 All idly, " Love me little, love me long."

Outside loud cawed the noisy busy rook,
 And ever and again the cuckoo's cry
 Resounded through the woods, and with it took
 Her thoughts to one bright day of spring gone by
 When first she heard it, and her fair cheek burned
 As she her pocket-piece within her pocket turned,

And wished in simple faith a wish, that she
 Must till its consummation secret keep.
 Ah ! would the secret shared by two might be,

And joy through it into her heart might creep ;
 For if the charm but worked, her king was won
 And she would be the happiest maiden 'neath the sun.

Thus musing she up-bound her shining hair,
 Smoothed out the folds of her trim dainty gown ;
 And quick she slipped down the oaken stair,
 And oped the garden door, that roses crown
 With crimson bloom ; and wandered through the maze
 Of box-edged borders quaint, with gayest flowers
 ablaze.

Beneath the walnut-tree that graced the lawn
 A youth stood, wondering if to go or stay ;
 The gathering glory of the summer morn
 Around in misty sparkling splendour lay.
 He turned to go, then did his steps retrace ;
 And still he lingered as if loth to leave the place.

Thus each unto the other nearer drew,
 Unconscious that the other was so near ;
 Yet o'er each cheek flushed forth a rosier hue,
 As in the presence of the one most dear ;
 Each breathed a gentler air, as though kind Heaven
 Had to the blooming earth soft Eden breezes given.

Loud sing the birds—the rippling waters dance .
 As tinkling silver bells o'er moss-grown stones ;
 Whilst sudden Lettice' downcast eyes up-glance,
 And with deep tell-tale blush her king she owns ;
 Whilst thus he spake : " Thou wilt not say me nay,
 Lettice, my queen, my life, my only love away ?"

O cuckoo ! cuckoo ! Then the charm is true,
 The maiden's wish when she first heard thy voice
 Hath come to pass. The secret's known to two,
 And over it two loving hearts rejoice.
 Ah, who would think the cuckoo's note could bring
 A coronation-song for queen and king ?

So mused sweet Lettice in her glad content
 That all the world so very fair had grown ;
 Yet still as on and on the lovers went,
 The maiden's heart inclined to change its tone.
 " O cuckoo ! cuckoo ! it was love, not thee,
 That led the footsteps of my king to me !"

JULIA GODDARD.





SWEET-BRIAR LANE.

A REVERIE.

IT will return no more,
That past with all its pain !
The weary days I knew of yore
Can never come again ;
And dearer thou than e'er before,
My lone Sweet-briar Lane.

My tears may freely flow,
They are not bitter tears,
And though I'm far from thee, I know,
That thought the more endears
Thy memory, which has caught a glow
From the departed years.

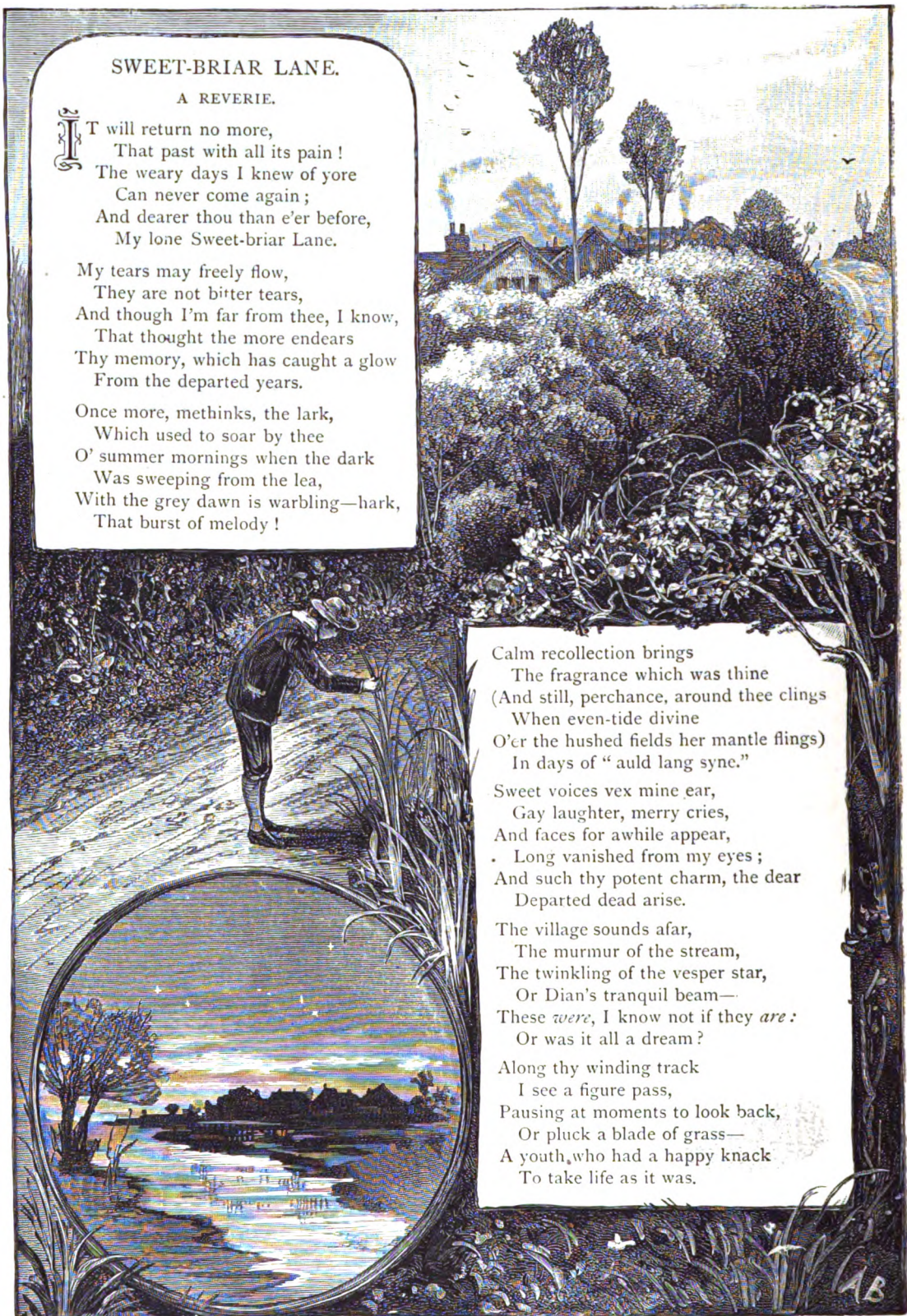
Once more, methinks, the lark,
Which used to soar by thee
O' summer mornings when the dark
Was sweeping from the lea,
With the grey dawn is warbling—hark,
That burst of melody !

Calm recollection brings
The fragrance which was thine
(And still, perchance, around thee clings
When even-tide divine
O'er the hushed fields her mantle flings)
In days of "auld lang syne."

Sweet voices vex mine ear,
Gay laughter, merry cries,
And faces for awhile appear,
Long vanished from my eyes ;
And such thy potent charm, the dear
Departed dead arise.

The village sounds afar,
The murmur of the stream,
The twinkling of the vesper star,
Or Dian's tranquil beam—
These *were*, I know not if they *are* :
Or was it all a dream ?

Along thy winding track
I see a figure pass,
Pausing at moments to look back,
Or pluck a blade of grass—
A youth, who had a happy knack
To take life as it was.





His face, a beardless face ;
 No wrinkles on his brow,
 But ruddy health and boyhood's grace,
 And ne'er a thought, I vow,
 Of coming sorrow—in their place
 How sad a change is now !

It will return no more,
 That past with all its pain !
 The weary days I knew of yore
 Can never come again ;
 And dearer thou than e'er before,
 My lost Sweet-Briar Lane.

J. H. DAVIES.

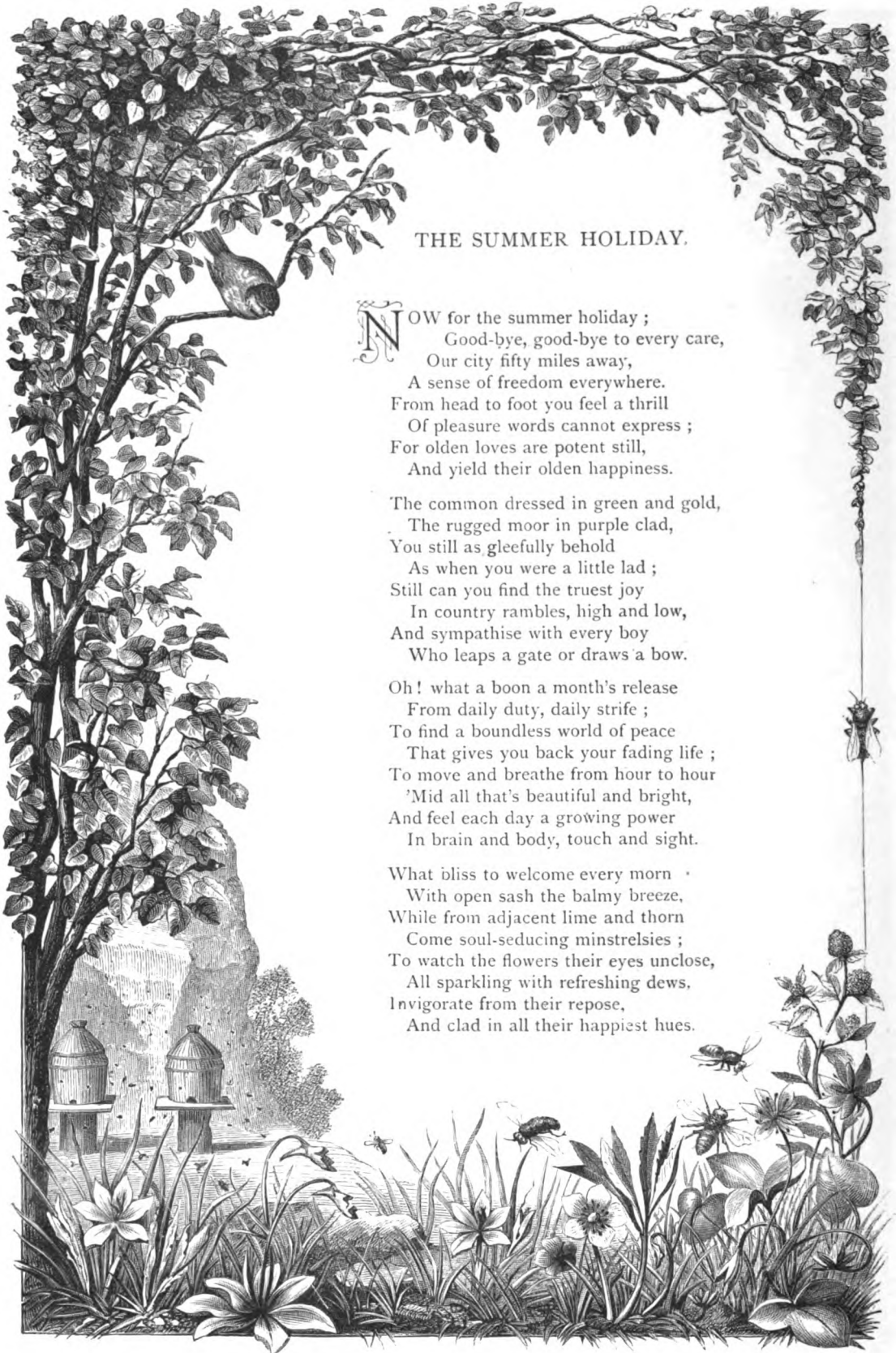
THE SUMMER HOLIDAY.

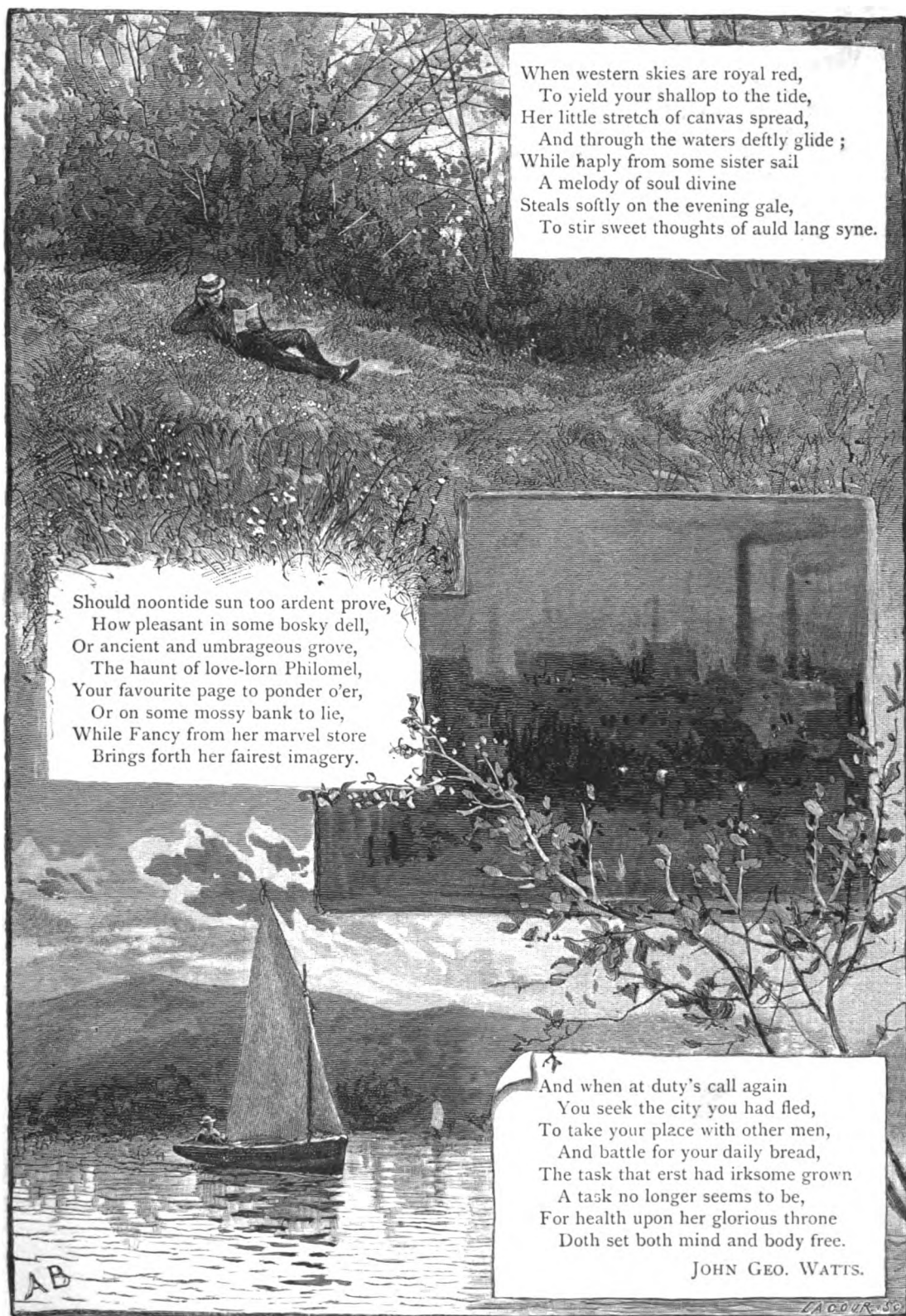
NOW for the summer holiday ;
 Good-bye, good-bye to every care,
 Our city fifty miles away,
 A sense of freedom everywhere.
 From head to foot you feel a thrill
 Of pleasure words cannot express ;
 For olden loves are potent still,
 And yield their olden happiness.

The common dressed in green and gold,
 The rugged moor in purple clad,
 You still as gleefully behold
 As when you were a little lad ;
 Still can you find the truest joy
 In country rambles, high and low,
 And sympathise with every boy
 Who leaps a gate or draws a bow.

Oh ! what a boon a month's release
 From daily duty, daily strife ;
 To find a boundless world of peace
 That gives you back your fading life ;
 To move and breathe from hour to hour
 'Mid all that's beautiful and bright,
 And feel each day a growing power
 In brain and body, touch and sight.

What bliss to welcome every morn
 With open sash the balmy breeze,
 While from adjacent lime and thorn
 Come soul-seducing minstrelsies ;
 To watch the flowers their eyes unclose,
 All sparkling with refreshing dews,
 Invigorate from their repose,
 And clad in all their happiest hues.



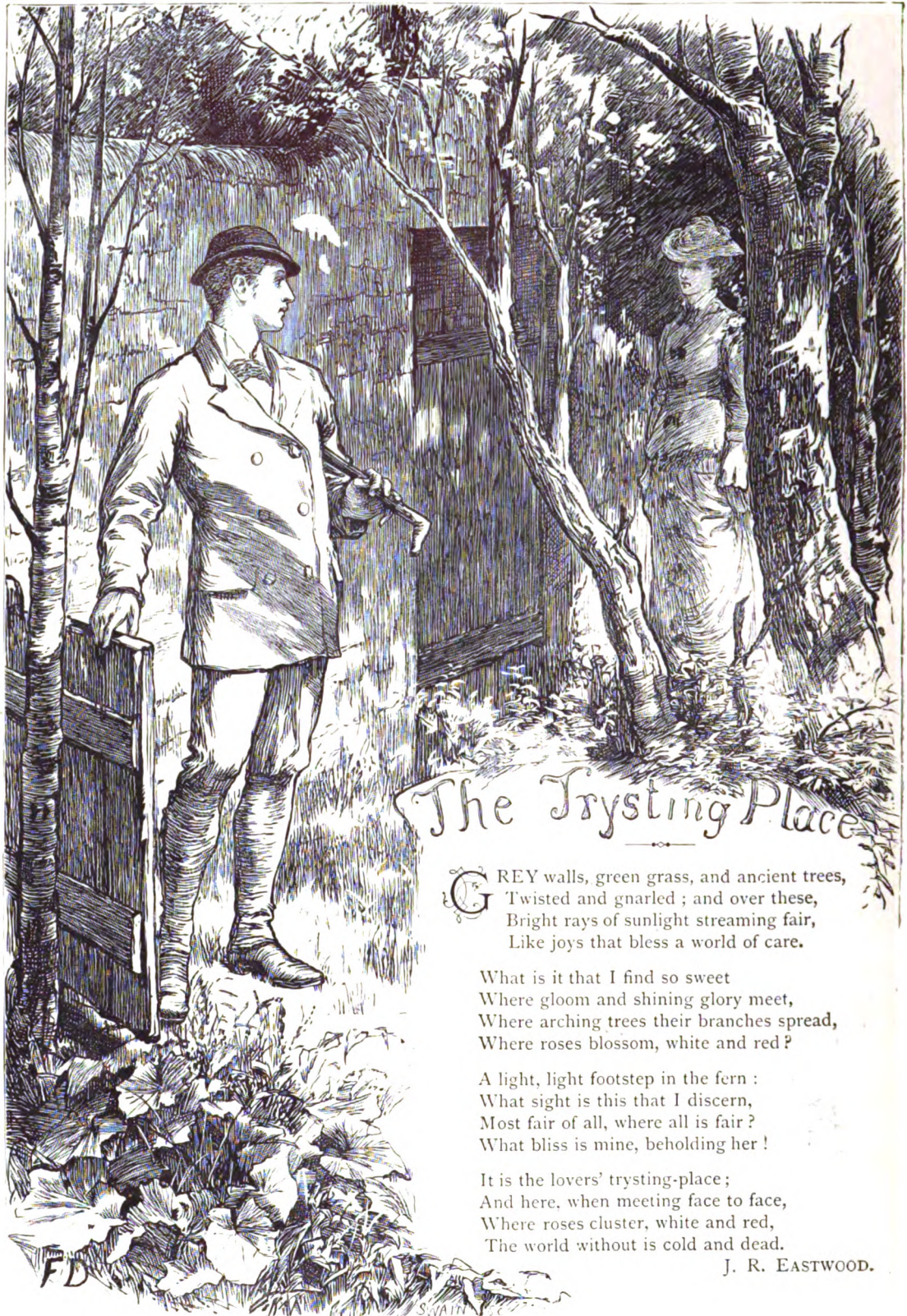


When western skies are royal red,
 To yield your shallop to the tide,
 Her little stretch of canvas spread,
 And through the waters deftly glide ;
 While haply from some sister sail
 A melody of soul divine
 Steals softly on the evening gale,
 To stir sweet thoughts of auld lang syne.

Should noontide sun too ardent prove,
 How pleasant in some bosky dell,
 Or ancient and umbrageous grove,
 The haunt of love-lorn Philomel,
 Your favourite page to ponder o'er,
 Or on some mossy bank to lie,
 While Fancy from her marvel store
 Brings forth her fairest imagery.

And when at duty's call again
 You seek the city you had fled,
 To take your place with other men,
 And battle for your daily bread,
 The task that erst had irksome grown
 A task no longer seems to be,
 For health upon her glorious throne
 Doth set both mind and body free.

JOHN GEO. WATTS.



The Trysting Place

GREY walls, green grass, and ancient trees,
Twisted and gnarled ; and over these,
Bright rays of sunlight streaming fair,
Like joys that bless a world of care.

What is it that I find so sweet
Where gloom and shining glory meet,
Where arching trees their branches spread,
Where roses blossom, white and red ?

A light, light footstep in the fern :
What sight is this that I discern,
Most fair of all, where all is fair ?
What bliss is mine, beholding her !

It is the lovers' trysting-place ;
And here, when meeting face to face,
Where roses cluster, white and red,
The world without is cold and dead.

J. R. EASTWOOD.

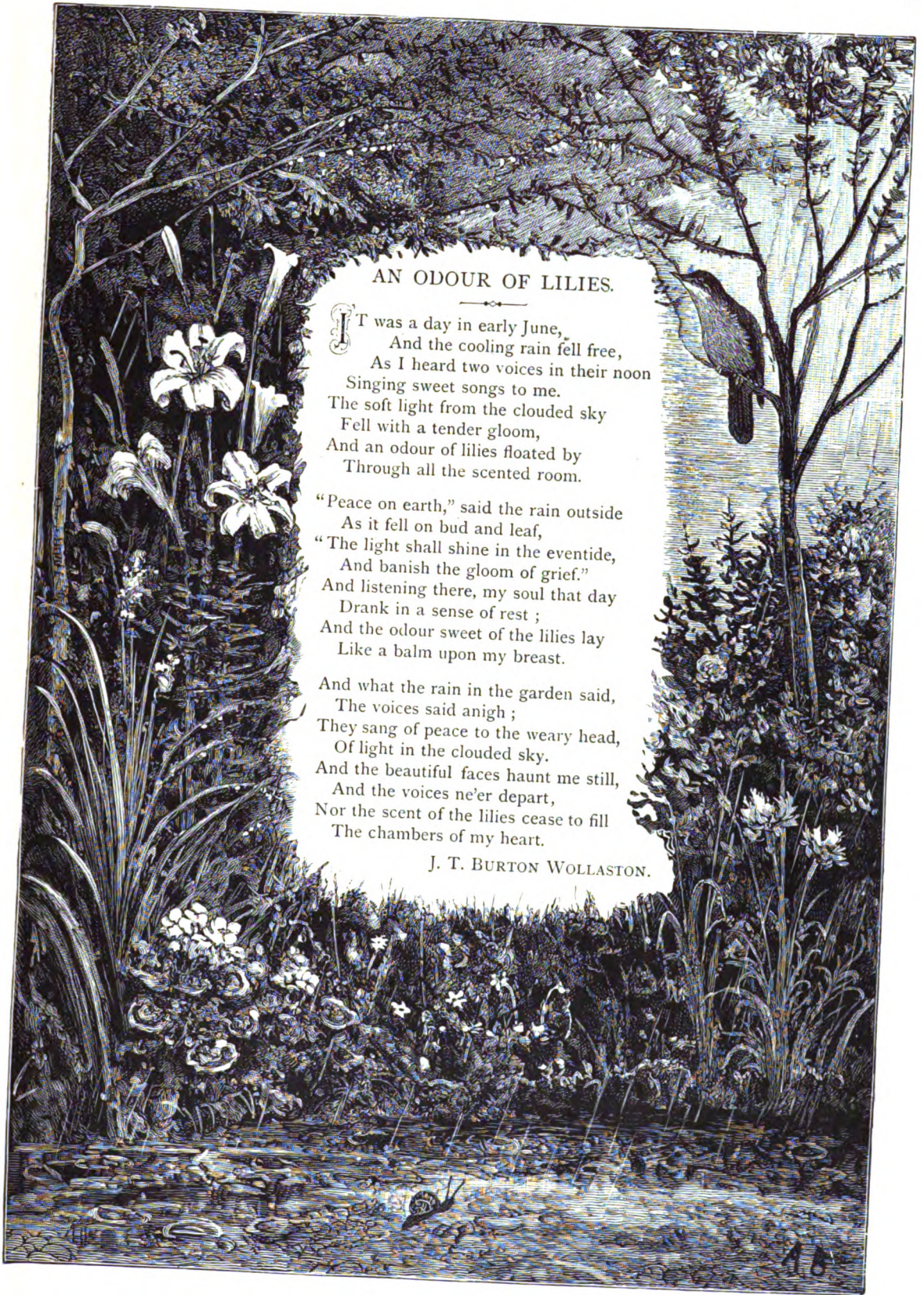
AN ODOUR OF LILIES.

IT was a day in early June,
And the cooling rain fell free,
As I heard two voices in their noon
Singing sweet songs to me.
The soft light from the clouded sky
Fell with a tender gloom,
And an odour of lilies floated by
Through all the scented room.

"Peace on earth," said the rain outside
As it fell on bud and leaf,
"The light shall shine in the eventide,
And banish the gloom of grief."
And listening there, my soul that day
Drank in a sense of rest ;
And the odour sweet of the lilies lay
Like a balm upon my breast.

And what the rain in the garden said,
The voices said anigh ;
They sang of peace to the weary head,
Of light in the clouded sky.
And the beautiful faces haunt me still,
And the voices ne'er depart,
Nor the scent of the lilies cease to fill
The chambers of my heart.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.





SUMMER DAYS.

RIVER that goeth
On through the town,
Silently floweth,
Sombre and brown ;
O sad-hearted river,
So quiet and cold,
Can you not ripple
Just as of old ?

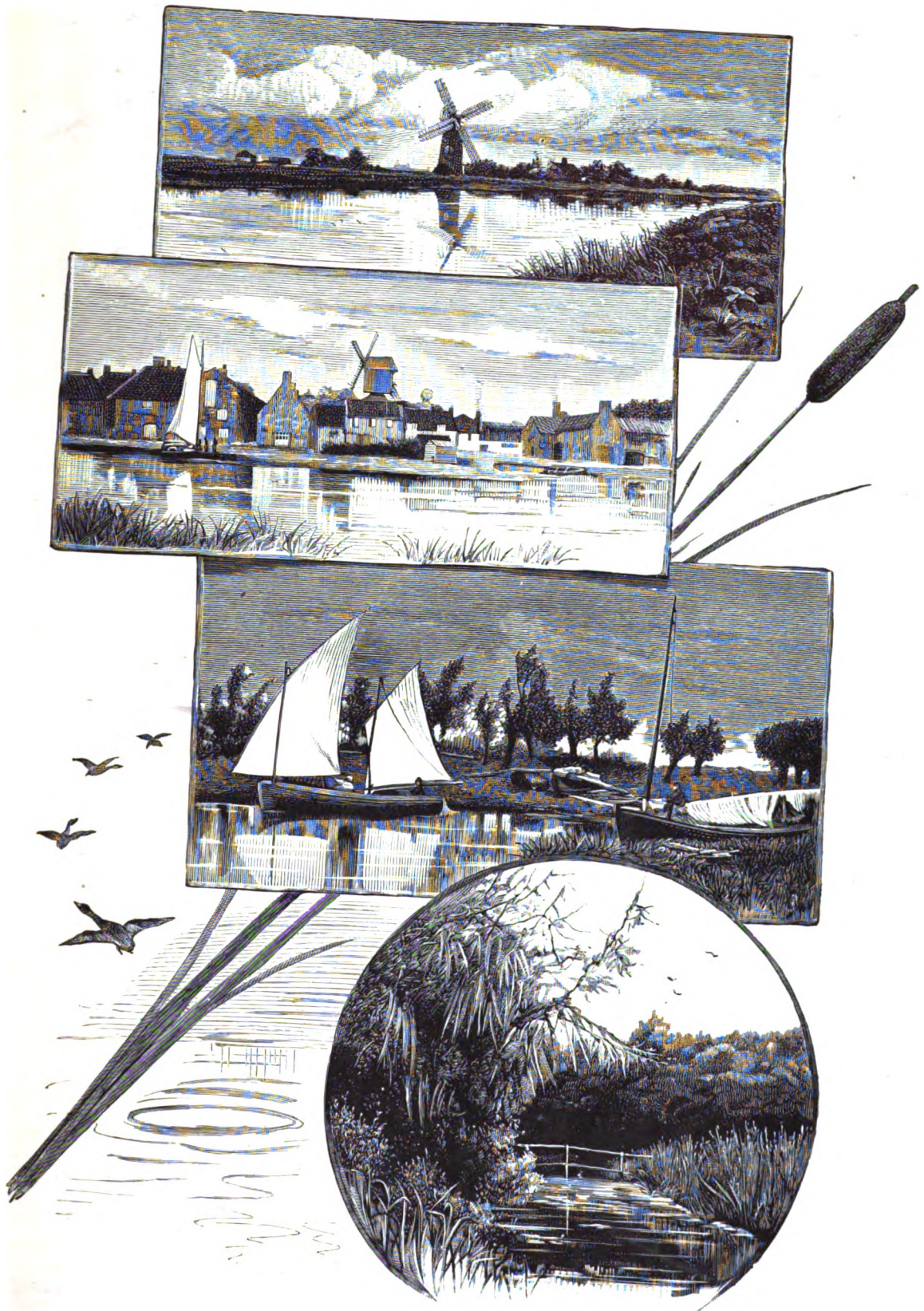
Oh, have you parted for ever and ever
From the days when you laughed 'mid the rushes,
When you sparkled in vainest endeavour,
Just to rival the sky's crimson flushes ?
Has the gladness and life of you perished ?
Must you ever be silent and slow ?
Have you lost all the joy that you cherished
In the sweet summer days long ago ?
O sad-hearted river,
So quiet and cold,
Can you not ripple
Just as of old ?

Heart of mine, creeping
On to the end,
Why are you keeping
Grief for a friend ?
Oh, put off your sadness !
Oh, why are you cold ?
Rouse you to gladness,
Just as of old !

Oh, have you parted for ever and ever
From the days when you'd Hope near to cheer you ?
Did you wish from your neighbour to sever,
With Despair in her stead ever near you ?
Has the joy and the mirth of you perished ?
Must you cling to your grief and your woe ?
Have you lost all the hopes that you cherished
In the sweet summer days long ago ?

Heart of mine, creeping
On to the end,
Why are you keeping
Grief for a friend ?
Oh, put off your sadness,
Oh, why are you cold ?
Rouse you to gladness,
Just as of old !

G. WEATHERLY..



THOUGHTS OF PAST DAYS.

H, love! first felt when summer days were
 bluest,
 And warm the rural solitude, where brightly
 The sun glowed, and the south wind lifted lightly
 The beech-wood's leaves, how richly thou imbuest
 Life with delights of Paradise when newest,
 When glances coyly charmed, and hand touched
 slightly



Enchanted the sweet blood with faith the truest ;
 And brought the time when the kiss given nightly
 Out-paragoned all preciousness. Awaking
 To hear her voice, and at the casement meet her,
 And take the treasured rose, than all things sweeter
 Save her red lips—to rove we knew not whither,
 Lost in each other, growing one together.
 If heaven be happiness, love, 'tis of thy making !



NAMELESS.

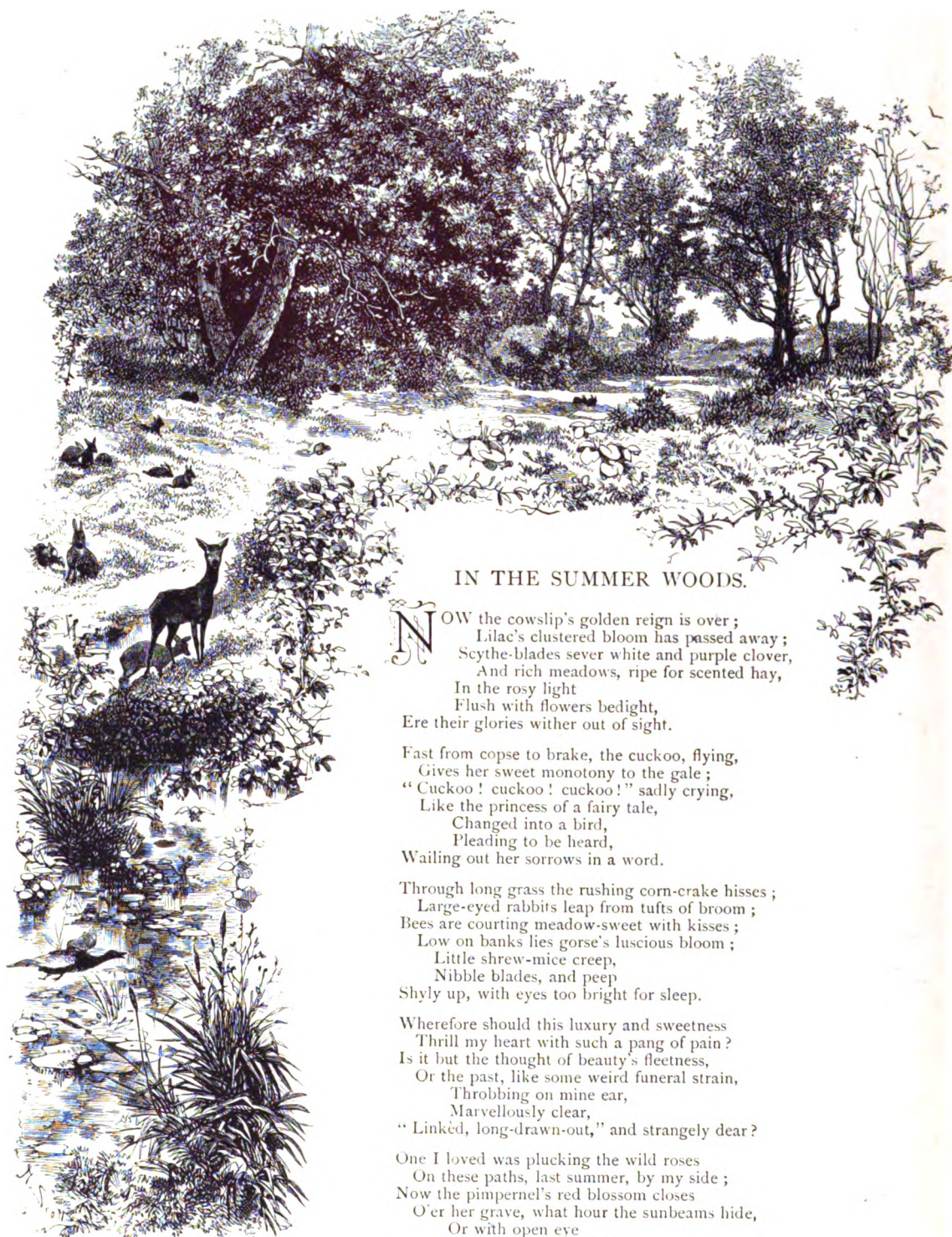
THE summer sun is on the trees,
And not a path is shady;
You sit within the porch to read,
A very dainty lady.
And isn't a poem makes you grave,
Or just an old love-story
Of maiden bright, and valiant knight
Who rides away to glory?

I know the kind of story well :
The maiden's hair is golden,
The knight wears armour as they did
In days we now call olden.
They make their vows by moonlight,
dear,
In language rather stilted,
And then she pines alone for months,
And wonders if she's jilted.

E

But he comes gaily back, to find
She is of maids the truest,
And lovelier far than maidens are
With even eyes the bluest—
Not lovelier, sweet, than you to-day,
With sunshine on your bower,
A leafy nook, in which you look
The very fairest flower.

Would I might read the story too,
And chat with you about it ;
Perhaps it's just as well I can't—
Indeed, I do not doubt it.
A pretty picture, dear, you make,
And in my heart I'll frame it ;
I do not know what you are called,
And so I cannot name it.



IN THE SUMMER WOODS.

NOW the cowslip's golden reign is over ;
 Lilac's clustered bloom has passed away ;
 Scythe-blades sever white and purple clover,
 And rich meadows, ripe for scented hay,
 In the rosy light
 Flush with flowers bedight,
 Ere their glories wither out of sight.

Fast from copse to brake, the cuckoo, flying,
 Gives her sweet monotony to the gale ;
 "Cuckoo ! cuckoo ! cuckoo !" sadly crying,
 Like the princess of a fairy tale,
 Changed into a bird,
 Pleading to be heard,
 Wailing out her sorrows in a word.

Through long grass the rushing corn-crake hisses ;
 Large-eyed rabbits leap from tufts of broom ;
 Bees are courting meadow-sweet with kisses ;
 Low on banks lies gorse's luscious bloom ;
 Little shrew-mice creep,
 Nibble blades, and peep
 Shyly up, with eyes too bright for sleep.

Wherefore should this luxury and sweetness
 Thrill my heart with such a pang of pain ?
 Is it but the thought of beauty's fleetness,
 Or the past, like some weird funeral strain,
 Throbbing on mine ear,
 Marvellously clear,
 "Linked, long-drawn-out," and strangely dear ?

One I loved was plucking the wild roses
 On these paths, last summer, by my side ;
 Now the pimpernel's red blossom closes
 O'er her grave, what hour the sunbeams hide,
 Or with open eye
 Greets the cloudless sky,
 Threshold of my darling's home on high.





A BUNCH OF ROSES.

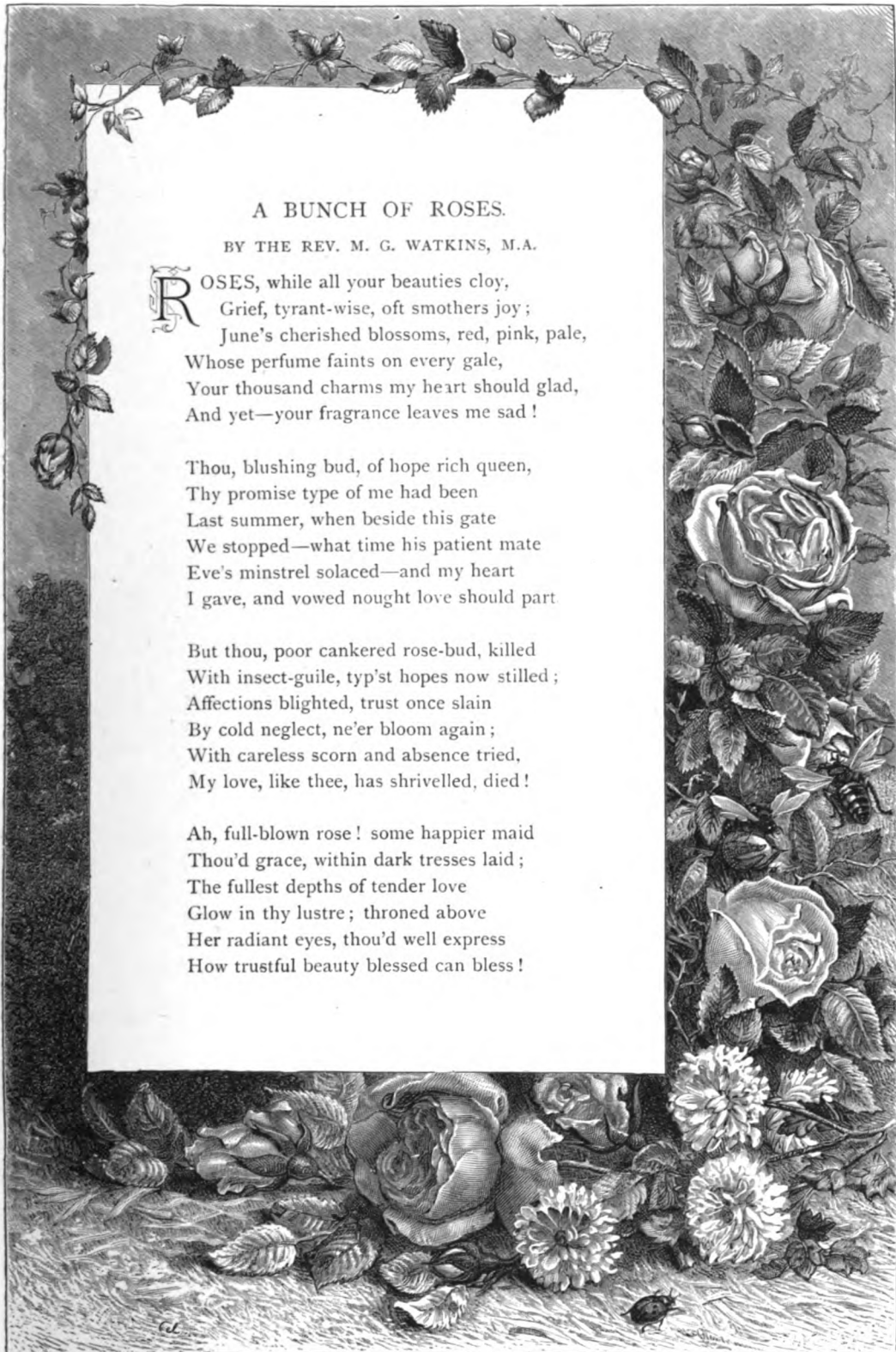
BY THE REV. M. G. WATKINS, M.A.

ROSES, while all your beauties cloy,
 Grief, tyrant-wise, oft smothers joy ;
 June's cherished blossoms, red, pink, pale,
 Whose perfume faints on every gale,
 Your thousand charms my heart should glad,
 And yet—your fragrance leaves me sad !

Thou, blushing bud, of hope rich queen,
 Thy promise type of me had been
 Last summer, when beside this gate
 We stopped—what time his patient mate
 Eve's minstrel solaced—and my heart
 I gave, and vowed nought love should part

But thou, poor cankered rose-bud, killed
 With insect-guile, typ'st hopes now stilled ;
 Affections blighted, trust once slain
 By cold neglect, ne'er bloom again ;
 With careless scorn and absence tried,
 My love, like thee, has shrivelled, died !

Ah, full-blown rose ! some happier maid
 Thou'd grace, within dark tresses laid ;
 The fullest depths of tender love
 Glow in thy lustre ; throned above
 Her radiant eyes, thou'd well express
 How trustful beauty blessed can bless !



BEAUTY: A SONNET.

AMID the flower-scented hay she stood—
 A little village lass with clear-cut face,
 Eyelids long-lashed, drooping with pensive
 grace,
 A mouth that quivered with her every mood—
 A well-wrought picture of sweet womanhood.
 And I was weak as men must always be,
 And so for one brief moment bent the knee,

And worshipped beauty as life's highest good.
 Then reason's voice rang clear : Oh, strangely
 blind !
 Seek beauty rather of the soul and mind ;
 The eyes that gaze on changeless beauty tire ;
 When mind seeks mind and hungers all in vain,
 When higher thought is met by weak desire,
 Glad life is shrouded with a dull dense pain.

G. WEATHERLY.



ROBIN COMES HOME TO-DAY.

OUR Robin sail'd across the sea,
 When shone the summer's sun,
 Ere leaflets fell in dale and dell,
 Or winter had begun.
 He said, when came the verdant spring,
 He would be sailing near,
 And tidings come that close at home
 To-day is Robin dear !

Our Robin he comes home to-day,
 O let our hearts rejoice ;
 For it is dear to have him near,
 And hear his bonny voice !

The days have seem'd so sad and long
 Since he has been away ;
 None can replace his smiling face,
 That beams so frank and gay ;
 And we have miss'd his merry laugh
 That used our hearts to cheer ;
 But all is well, so tears dispel,
 To-day is Robin near !

Our Robin he comes home to-day,
 O let our hearts rejoice ;
 For it is dear to have him near,
 And hear his bonny voice !





CONSUMMATION.

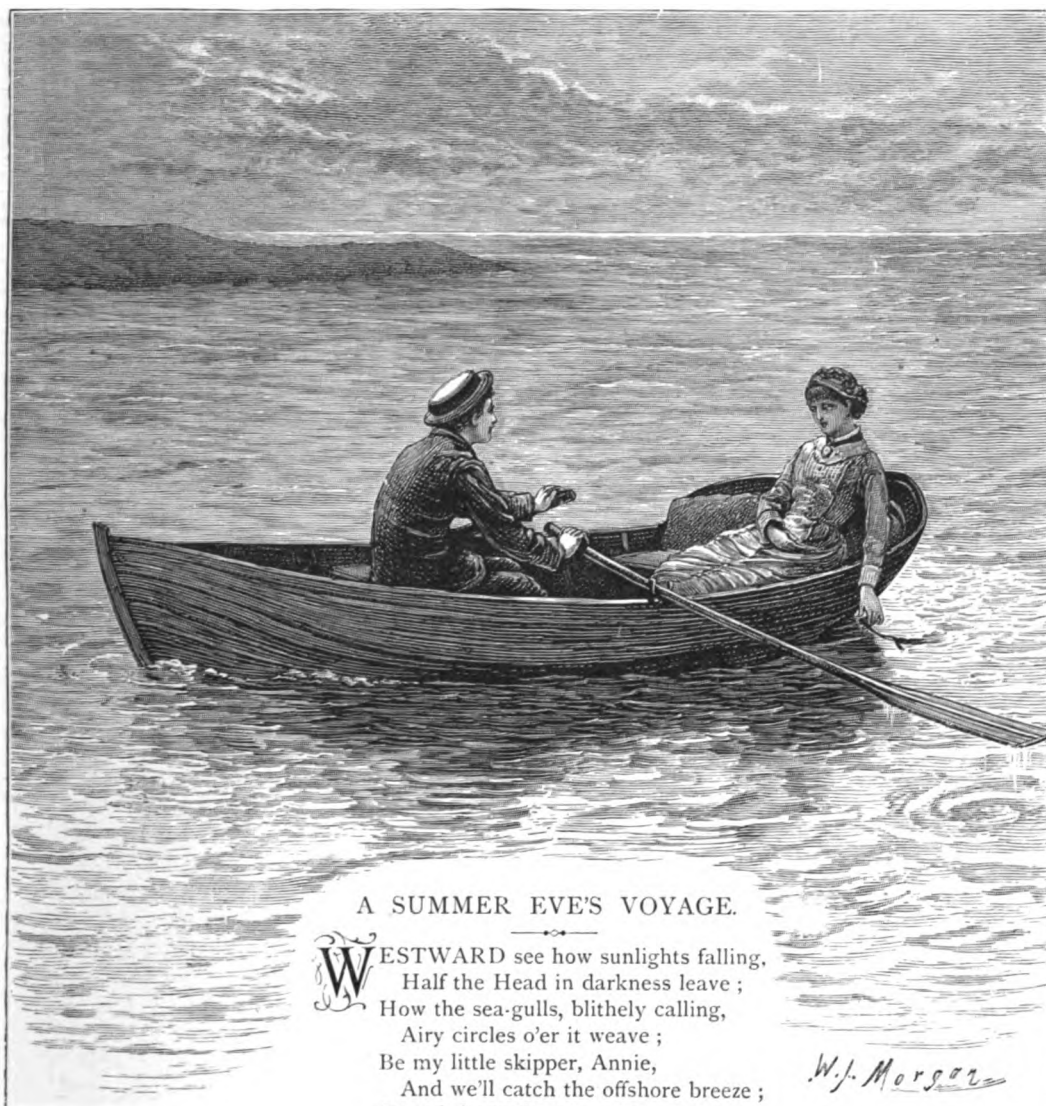
AH ! is it well that, fresh and free,
The brook should babble through the lea,
And, waxing broader, wind between
The willow-bordered banks and green,
To gain the salt and bitter sea ?

Ah ! is it well that I should see
The folded rosebuds on the tree,
And find, from day to fairer day,
The leaves unfold and fall away,
Till my last rose is lost to me ?

Ah ! is it well that there should be
Such silence over land and sea,
Such rapt repose in brooding skies,
Before the thunder-clouds arise,
And all of former quiet flee ?

Ah ! is it well, when thus to thee
Thy lover bends the suppliant knee,
That thy coy lips should still refrain
From one kind word which blesses twain,
Which speaks thy sweet consent to me ?

J. R. EASTWOOD.



A SUMMER EVE'S VOYAGE.

WESTWARD see how sunlights falling,
 Half the Head in darkness leave ;
 How the sea-gulls, blithely calling,
 Airy circles o'er it weave ;
 Be my little skipper, Annie,
 And we'll catch the offshore breeze ;
 Round the rocks are wonders many,
 Sights a landsman never sees."

W. J. Morgan

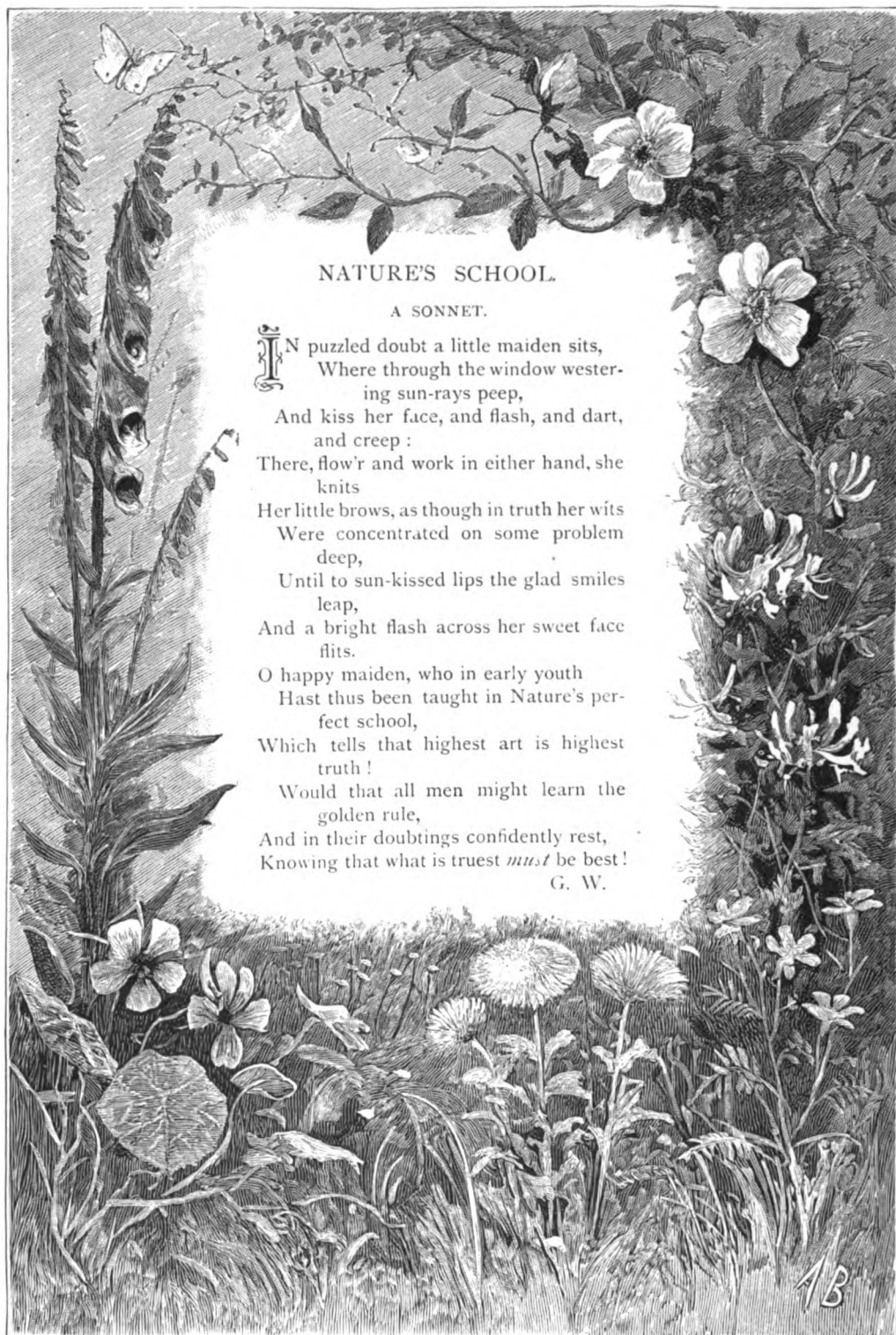
Soon they cleave the bay, scarce ruffled,
 Soon lie off the headland's verge,
 See the rocks in oar-weed muffled,
 Mermaid-gardens 'neath the surge ;
 Living star, and flower, and feather,
 Blooming, waving, far and wide :
 Faces—boy's and girl's together—
 Mirrored meeting in the tide.

Round the headland, careless drifted,
 Float they where the shadowy swell,
 Fitfully 'gainst rocks uplifted,
 Back in silver torrents fell ;
 And they watched the gleaming shingle,
 With the fishers' cots above ;
 Till blue heaven, grey earth, commingle,
 And o'er ocean star-hosts move.

Why doth Annie dip her fingers
 Pensive through their homeward track ?
 Silent, too, the oarsman lingers
 As he rows his skipper back ;
 Fragrant Eve and moonlight's glory—
 Has their subtle magic wrought
 Foretastes of "the old, old story"
 Aye to young affections taught ?

Happy, who thus seeking beauty,
 Hand in hand like children find
 From its quest love blossom, duty
 In its outward forms enshrined ;
 Happier they, life's voyage ended,
 Who attain the welcome Shore,
 Where united hearts are blended
 In the peaceful evermore.

M. G. WATKINS, M.A.



NATURE'S SCHOOL.

A SONNET.

IN puzzled doubt a little maiden sits,
 Where through the window wester-
 ing sun-rays peep,
 And kiss her face, and flash, and dart,
 and creep :
 There, flow'r and work in either hand, she
 knits
 Her little brows, as though in truth her wits
 Were concentrated on some problem
 deep,
 Until to sun-kissed lips the glad smiles
 leap,
 And a bright flash across her sweet face
 flits.
 O happy maiden, who in early youth
 Hast thus been taught in Nature's per-
 fect school,
 Which tells that highest art is highest
 truth !
 Would that all men might learn the
 golden rule,
 And in their doubtings confidently rest,
 Knowing that what is truest *must* be best !
 G. W.





A SONG OF THE OAK.

HERE, in the deep, dark greenwood,
My friend, sit down with me ;
We'll rest beneath the shelter
Of yonder old oak-tree.

Far from the crowded city,
Its heat and dust and smoke,
How sweet to seek in summer
Old England's woods of oak !

The cloudless sun beats fiercely
On corn and pasture land ;
And knee-deep in the river
The heated cattle stand ;
But here no sunbeam entered
Since first the morning woke,
So thick the leaf-clad branches
Of this old forest oak.

An ancient sire he's standing
Amid the trees around ;
Full twice ten decade summers
His roots are in the ground ;
An acorn he was planted,
Whose shoot the green glebe broke
When great Queen Bess in England
Ruled over hearts of oak.

His gnarlèd roots spread under
Through many a perch of earth ;
Our arms, stretched out together,
Will scarce span half his girth ;

Against his sturdy branches
The storms have vainly broke ;
Beneath their shade I'll sing you
A song of England's oak.

In ages that are distant
Two thousand years and more,
When merchants from Phœnicia
Came in their ships for ore ;
When the tin-miner's hammer
The forest-echoes woke,
O'er plain and hill and valley
Grew woods of sacred oak.

There, on stone-circled altars,
The Druid robed in white,
His forehead bound with oak-leaves,
Offered the blood-stained rite :
There gathered all the people
To hear the words he spoke,
With the virgin priestess near him,
Within these groves of oak.

Then from the oak men fashioned
The plough to till the land,
And made the scythe-armed chariot
To bear the warrior band,
Ere yet the painted Briton
Bowed to the Roman yoke,
Or Cæsar's legions drove him
For shelter to the oak.

The eagle swooped no longer
 Down on the Briton's soil ;
 The Norse foe came to plunder,
 The Saxon friend to spoil ;
 Till Danish Vikings landing
 Upon the Saxon broke,
 And smote their king in battle
 As the woodman smites the oak.

And Blake took heavy vengeance
 The Dutch taunt dared provoke,
 And broom-like swept the Channel
 With his fleet of British oak.

In British oak brave Rodney
 Upon De Grasse bore down,
 Broke through his lines, and captured
 His ships and won renown ;



Then through the oaken forests
 The axe rings on the trees,
 For Alfred builds him galleys
 To guard his island-seas.
 And from that day for ever
 The boast of British folk
 Is in their stalwart sailors
 And their ships of British oak.

In British oak stout Hawkins
 And Drake roved o'er the main,
 And Frobisher and Howard
 Laid low the pride of Spain ;

And Nelson, name the greatest
 The tongue of Fame e'er spoke,
 In life and death victorious,
 Fell upon British oak.

But time would fail to tell you
 What Briton's sons have done
 In our old oak-built war-ships,
 The battles fought and won.
 Still honoured be our oak-tree
 By all true British folk :
 May steel or iron never
 Displace our British oak.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.



ROBIN AND I: A RUSTIC SONG.

DOWN in the meadow where the red clover
Sheds its sweet fragrance to coax the wild bee,
Soon as the heat of the noonday is over,
Blithe as young children, contented, and free—
Cheered like the birds with the fine summer weather,
Charmed with the blue of the earth-arching sky,
Weaving bright fancies we saunter together,
Happy, how happy ! dear Robin and I !

Laughing he twines me a garland of daisies,
Pink-lipped and dewy, to wear in my hair—
Warm grows my cheek, for he whispers fond praises,
While his brown fingers stray lovingly there.
Dearest of fancies ! his true heart rejoices,
Not in the wild-flowers that round our feet lie,
Not in the birds that with shrill little voices
Sing till we chide them, dear Robin and I !

No, 'tis the thought that when cold winds are blowing,
Scaring the song-birds, and chilling the flowers,
Pure and unchanging our love shall be glowing,
Cheering our lives in their dreariest hours.
Slily he slips a wee ring on my finger—
Goldfinch and throstle, still fluttering nigh,
Ask one another how long we shall linger,
Talking sweet secrets, dear Robin and I !

Clearly the brooklet, that through the green cresses
Giddy with joyfulness dances along,
Shows us the shimmer of daisy-bound tresses,
Mingles *two* names in its fairy-like song ;
While the soft breezes, so gentle, so loving,
Steal through the flowers with a tremulous sigh,
Round the gay heads of the buttercups roving,
Seeming to whisper, "Dear Robin and I !"

"Dearest !" I murmur, with tenderest pity,
"Scorning the jewels that spangle the field,
Thousands are seeking for wealth in the city,
While the rich treasures that nature doth yield
Far from the toiling, the dust, and the shadow,
Live their sweet lives out, then wither and die."
Ah, in the summer-time rove we the meadow,
Rich beyond measure, dear Robin and I !

When the round moon rises stately and brightly,
Tipping with silver the mountains afar,
O'er the pale green of the grass gleaming whitely,
Hand-locked we watch for the first blinking star !
Far in the village bright tapers are burning,
Guiding us home, when we whisper "Good-bye ;"
Then in the hush of the evening returning,
Happy, how happy ! dear Robin and I !


FANNY FORRESTER.







MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD.

 H, dear old friend ! I
 come this way
 Once more, once more
 to rest on thee,
 While generous branch and
 leafy spray
 A pleasant bower make for me.

It seems as only yesterday
 That I was racing down the mead,
 With young companions blithe and gay,
 To mount thee, brave and bonny steed.

The blackbird pipes as cheerly now,
 As gaily flaunts the butterfly,
 As when we shook the pliant bough
 By madly urging thee on high.

But scattered is that gamesome band
 That filled with mirth the flying hours ;
 One sojourns in a distant land,
 One sleeps beneath the daisy flowers.

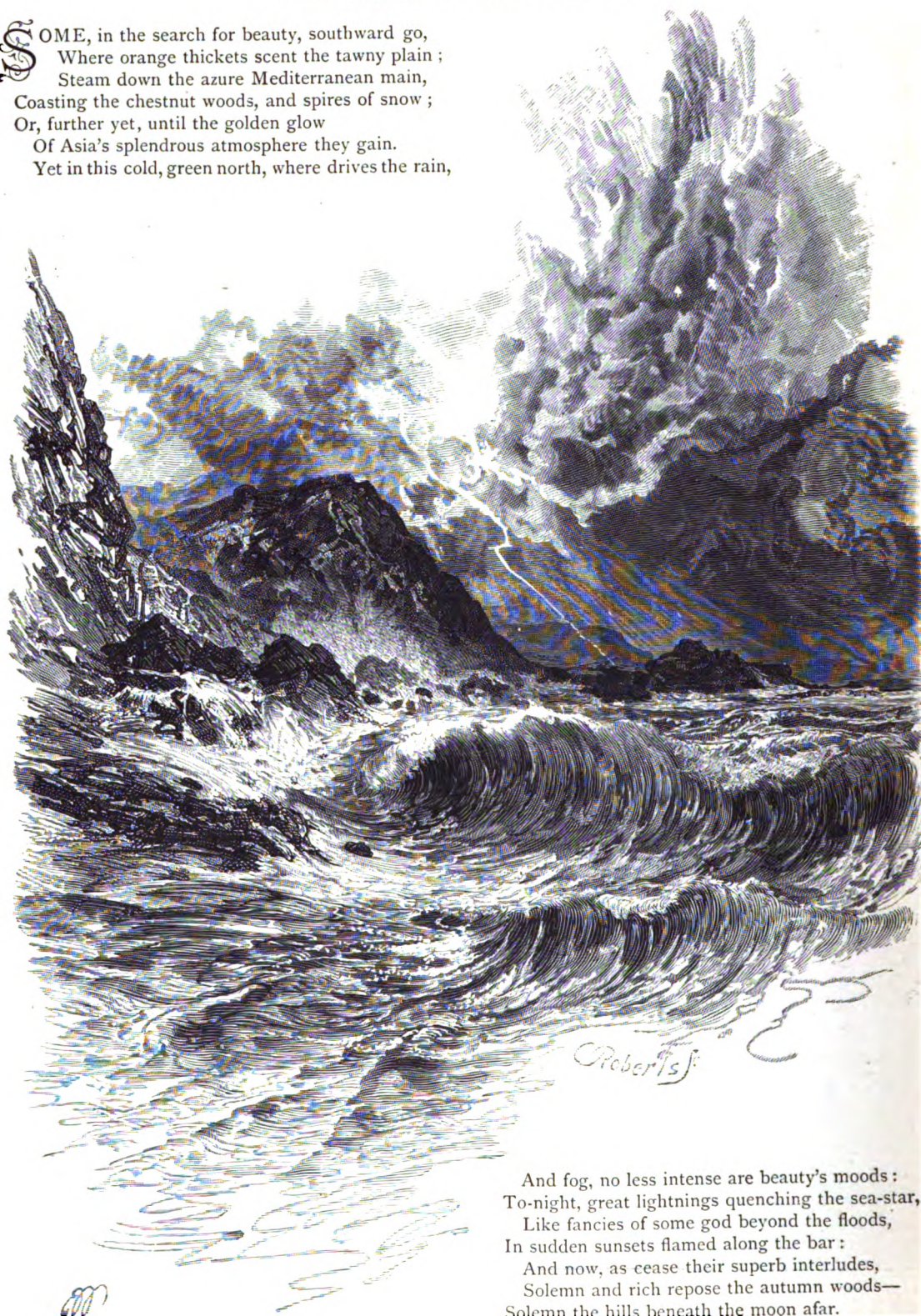
And others from my ken have passed,
 But this I feel, where'er they be,
 They'll not forget while life shall last
 Our swing beneath the chestnut-tree.

JOHN GEO. WATTS.



THE SEARCH FOR BEAUTY.

SOME, in the search for beauty, southward go,
 Where orange thickets scent the tawny plain ;
 Steam down the azure Mediterranean main,
 Coasting the chestnut woods, and spires of snow ;
 Or, further yet, until the golden glow
 Of Asia's splendrous atmosphere they gain.
 Yet in this cold, green north, where drives the rain,



And fog, no less intense are beauty's moods :
 To-night, great lightnings quenching the sea-star,
 Like fancies of some god beyond the floods,
 In sudden sunsets flamed along the bar :
 And now, as cease their superb interludes,
 Solemn and rich repose the autumn woods—
 Solemn the hills beneath the moon afar.

T. C. IRWIN.

SUNSHINE.

WE keep our faith in sunshine through
the rain,

On winter nights we dream of beauty spread

In glory—God's smile on His labours shed :

Nay ! what we miss, we often truly gain,

Learning to measure joy by present pain ;

Our minds are by their very hunger fed :

Love learns vast secrets from the silent
dead :

And emptiest loss is cup for fullest gain.

The winter snows and rains, and tempests
mad,

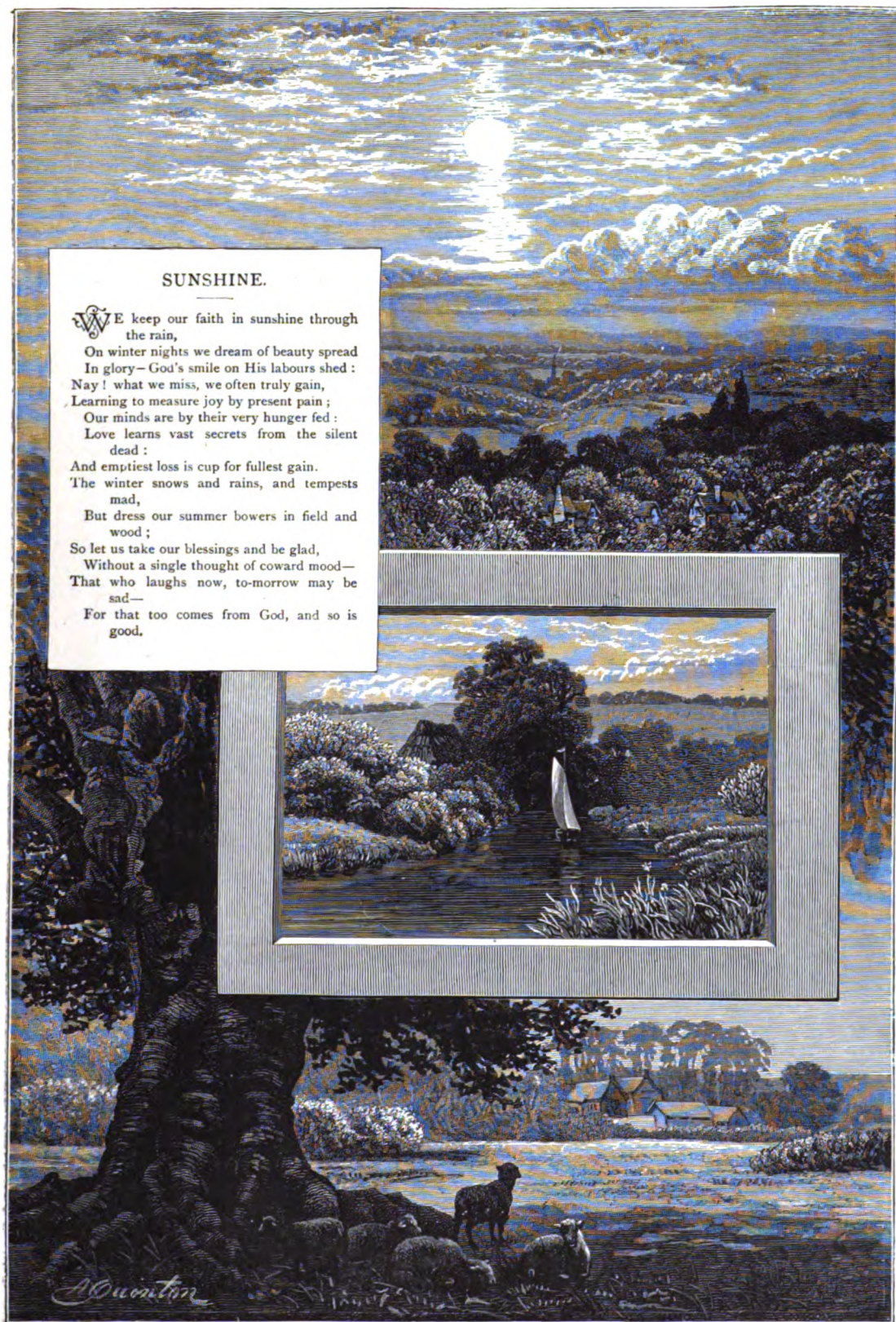
But dress our summer bowers in field and
wood ;

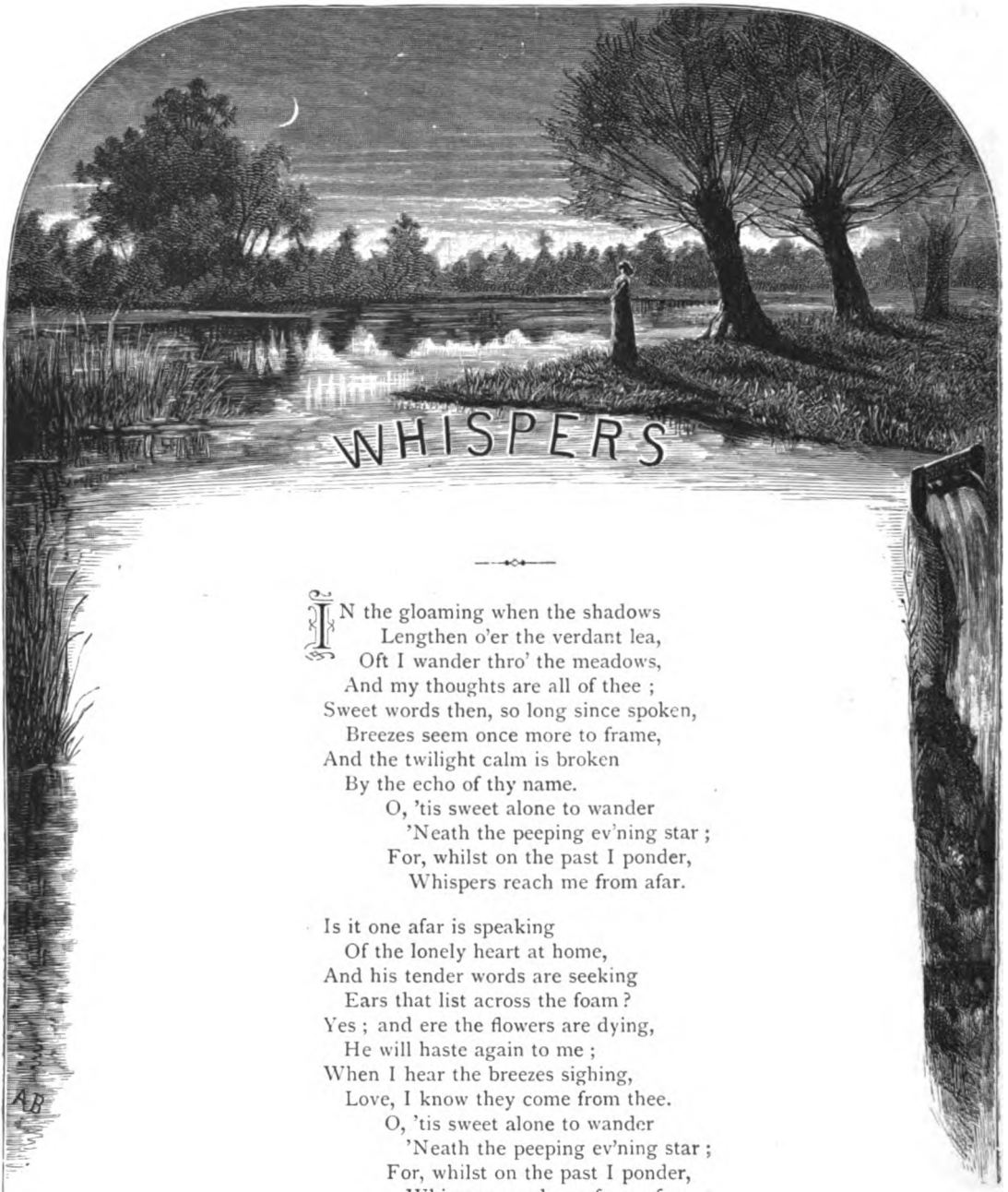
So let us take our blessings and be glad,

Without a single thought of coward mood—

That who laughs now, to-morrow may be
sad—

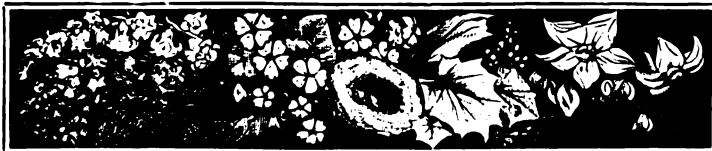
For that too comes from God, and so is
good.





IN the gloaming when the shadows
 Lengthen o'er the verdant lea,
 Oft I wander thro' the meadows,
 And my thoughts are all of thee ;
 Sweet words then, so long since spoken,
 Breezes seem once more to frame,
 And the twilight calm is broken
 By the echo of thy name.
 O, 'tis sweet alone to wander
 'Neath the peeping ev'ning star ;
 For, whilst on the past I ponder,
 Whispers reach me from afar.

Is it one afar is speaking
 Of the lonely heart at home,
 And his tender words are seeking
 Ears that list across the foam ?
 Yes ; and ere the flowers are dying,
 He will haste again to me ;
 When I hear the breezes sighing,
 Love, I know they come from thee.
 O, 'tis sweet alone to wander
 'Neath the peeping ev'ning star ;
 For, whilst on the past I ponder,
 Whispers reach me from afar.





THE VILLAGE WEDDING.

THE weeks and months, with long delay,
Have brought at last the wedding-day
And pealing bells, with merry din,
The joyful morn have ushered in.

And now the church begins to fill ;
And all are seated, pleased and still,
While matron looks rebuke the boys,
Who move their feet with shuffling noise.

And village girls, with whispered talk
And smiling lips, have lined the walk,
And ready stand, on either side,
To scatter flowers before the bride.

And soon she comes, with modest grace,
The bridegroom waiting in his place ;
The ring is on, the words are said,
They kneel to pray, and they are wed.

And shine in brightness, golden sun,
To crown a day so well begun !
And peal and shake the ivied tower,
O bells, to hail the bridal hour !

May every blessing with them stay
That we have wished for them to-day !
And happy be the lot in life
Of loyal husband, loving wife !



SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

A SONNET.

A

CASUAL meeting in a crowded street ;
An introduction through a mutual
friend ;

Blushes, soft words, and tender looks that
send

The thrill of love, delirious and sweet,
Through hearts that sympathetically beat ;
A morning call, then visits without end ;
Whispers in corners ; mellow voices blend
In happy harmony ; anon complete

Subjection to the thralldom of love's spell ;

An arm around a slender waist ; the old,
Old story, ever new, yet known so well ;

A faintly whispered answer to a bold

Request ; a kiss on lips that never tell ;

A wedding, and a circlet of bright gold.

TWILIGHT.

IT is the sweet and tender grace
 Of sorrow in a lovely face,
 When the bright eyes are brimmed with tears,
 That years through all the vanished years.

For, though long years have passed away,
 I still recall that parting day
 When here, with breaking hearts, we stood
 In this dim twilight of the wood.



The winding pathway is the same ;
 The oak, on which I carved her name,
 Still casts its shadow over me ;
 And still—Ah ! what is this I see ?

The pale face lifted to my own,
 The sad, sad lips that made sweet moan,
 Unconscious of the future years
 When other eyes would fill with tears.

WHILE THE SUN GOES DOWN.

BE with me, pleasant thought, that I may glean
 Fair fancies as I sit here in the shade;
 Be strong for me, my mem'ry, that the scene
 May not be soiled with meaner things, and fade:
 I can recall the pleasures I have known
 In pathless places, in old hopeful days;

The modest, fair forget-me-not is here:
 Who shall forget you? Not the lover—no;
 For he would give the bank of wild blooms near
 Rather than find you and without you go;
 And still these little gems of tender blue,
 That silently confess for timid swains,



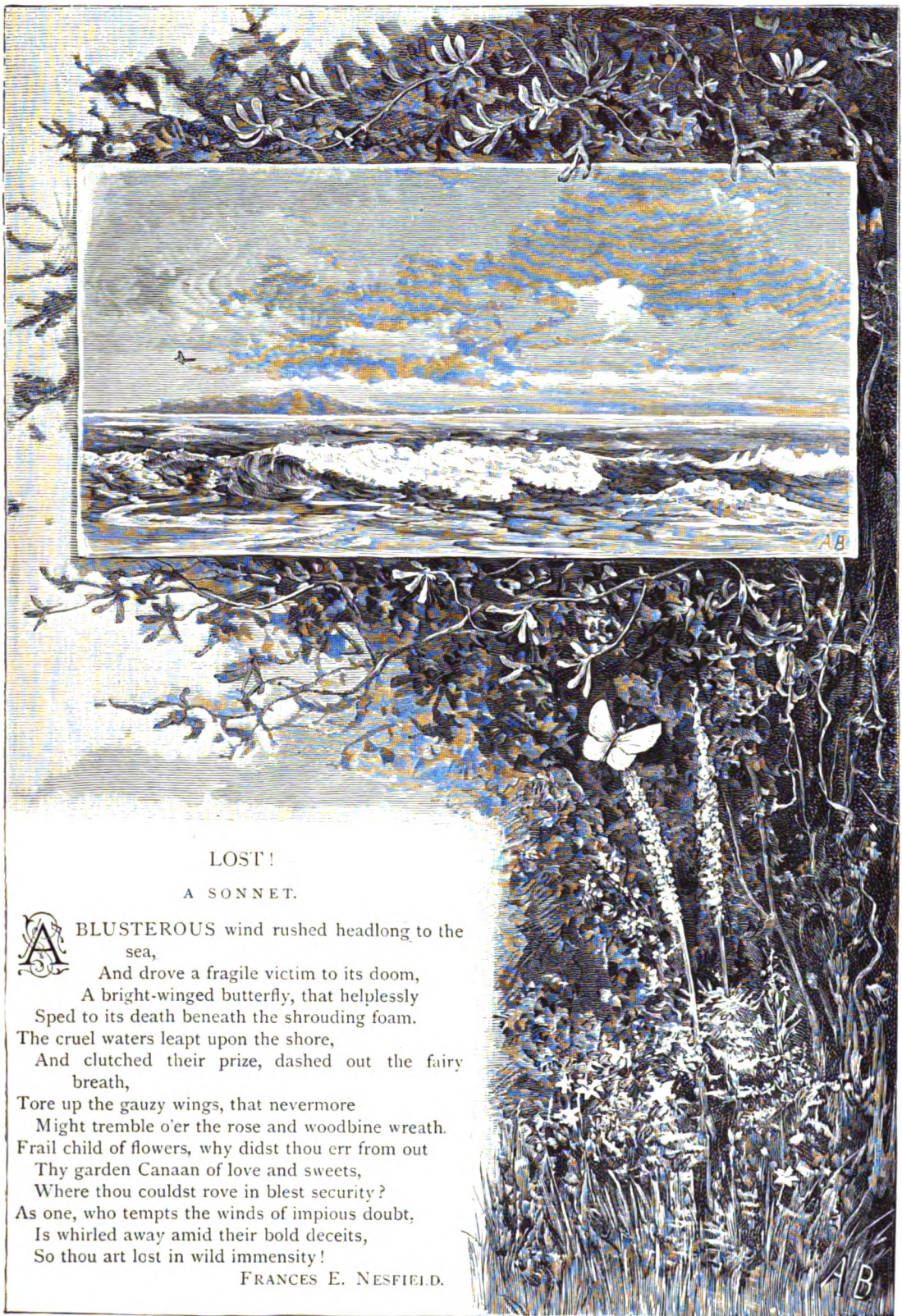
The charm of woodland music idly blown
 About broad boughs in unfrequented ways;
 Now may I print this picture on my brain,
 That I may see it in the winter rain.

The hills stretch out for miles, like to a sea
 Stilled into stone in some forgotten age,
 And robed with richest growth of herb and tree,
 By passing seasons in their pilgrimage;
 For years in thousands have they stood out there,
 And stared defiance at the tempest's frown;
 And yet to-day they show young colours, fair
 In many mixing tints of green and brown;
 But I forget the frail friends at my feet;
 How very short their lives—how very sweet!

Might, simple homely daisies, envy you,
 When children find you in the grassy lanes,
 And take you with unsullied hands and soft,
 And always love you, though they see you oft.

Above the trees, beyond the houseless moor,
 The coloured clouds, banked up, conspire to show
 Strange palaces with many a golden door,
 Where silver floods in jewell'd valleys flow;
 They fade, like fairy cities in a dream;
 The late lights linger of the weary sun,
 And now they slowly sink into the stream,
 And the cool hush of evening is begun:
 Now looming fires appear through cottage panes,
 To cheer the homeward walk along the lanes.

GUY ROSLYN.

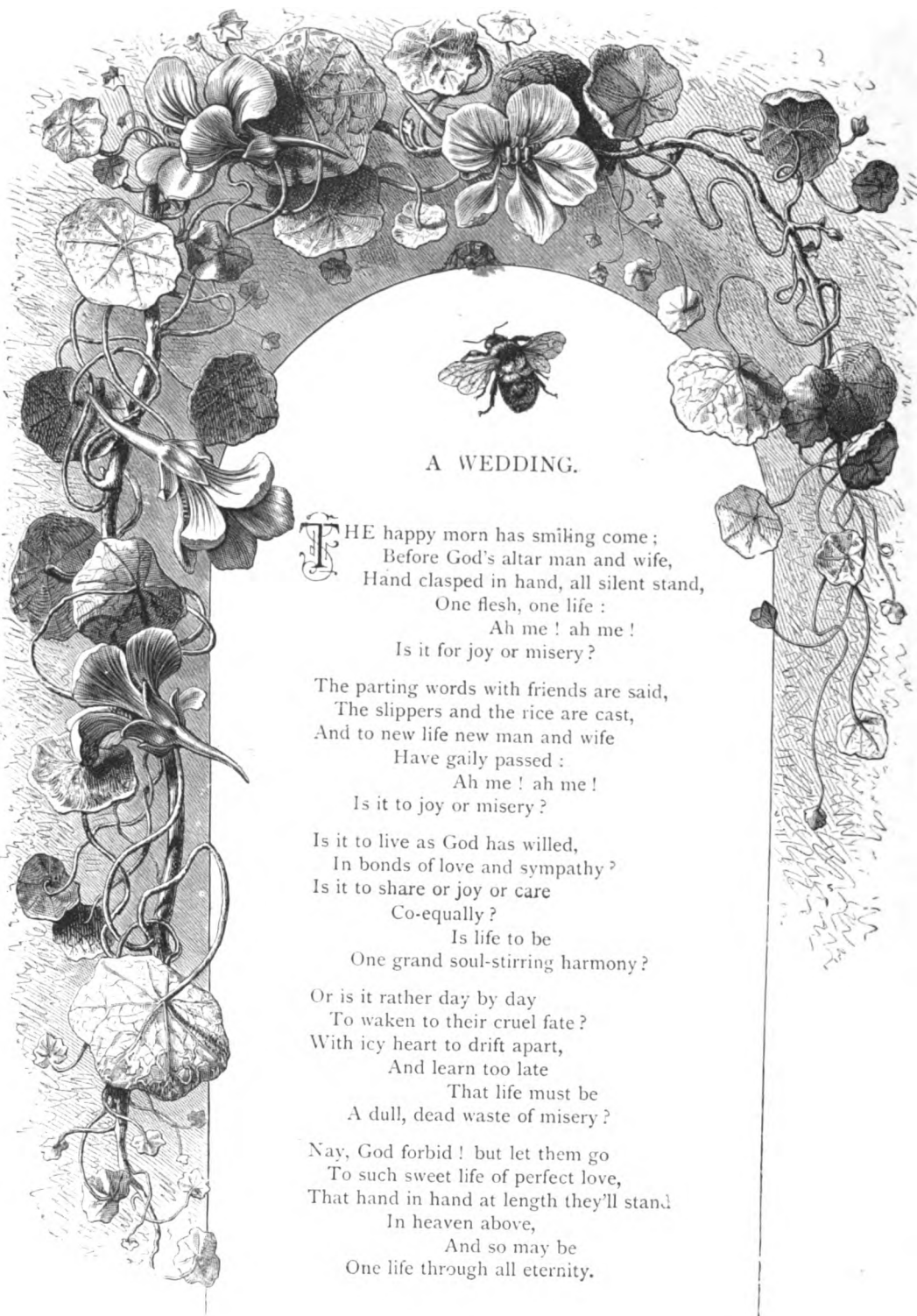


LOST!

A SONNET.

A BLUSTEROUS wind rushed headlong to the sea,
 And drove a fragile victim to its doom,
 A bright-winged butterfly, that helplessly
 Sped to its death beneath the shrouding foam.
 The cruel waters leapt upon the shore,
 And clutched their prize, dashed out the fairy
 breath,
 Tore up the gauzy wings, that nevermore
 Might tremble o'er the rose and woodbine wreath.
 Frail child of flowers, why didst thou err from out
 Thy garden Canaan of love and sweets,
 Where thou couldst rove in blest security?
 As one, who tempts the winds of impious doubt,
 Is whirled away amid their bold deceits,
 So thou art lost in wild immensity!

FRANCES E. NESFIELD.



A WEDDING.

THE happy morn has smiling come ;
 Before God's altar man and wife,
 Hand clasped in hand, all silent stand,
 One flesh, one life :

Ah me ! ah me !
 Is it for joy or misery ?

The parting words with friends are said,
 The slippers and the rice are cast,
 And to new life new man and wife
 Have gaily passed :

Ah me ! ah me !
 Is it to joy or misery ?

Is it to live as God has willed,
 In bonds of love and sympathy ?
 Is it to share or joy or care
 Co-equally ?

Is life to be
 One grand soul-stirring harmony ?

Or is it rather day by day
 To waken to their cruel fate ?
 With icy heart to drift apart,
 And learn too late
 That life must be
 A dull, dead waste of misery ?

Nay, God forbid ! but let them go
 To such sweet life of perfect love,
 That hand in hand at length they'll stand
 In heaven above,
 And so may be
 One life through all eternity.





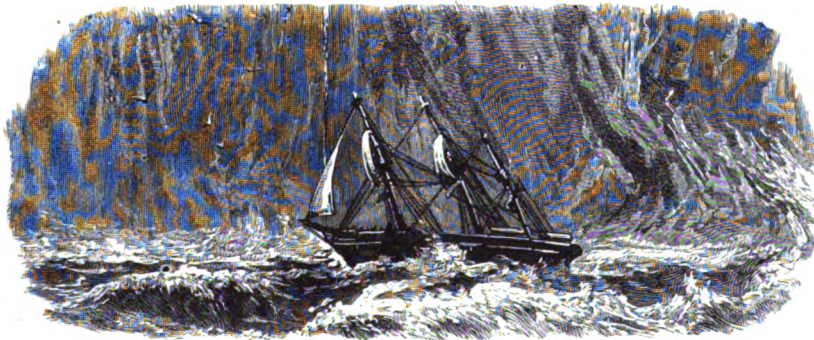
NEWS FROM HOME.

WHEN the heart is very dreary,
 Growing sadly over-weary
 Of the bonds that keep it lonely
 Like a bird in wicker dome,
 Comes a messenger most cheery,
 Though it be a letter only,
 For a mother wrote that "dearie,"
 And it bringeth news from home.

"News from home!" oh, welcome letter!
 Strong in power to break the fetter
 That encircles her who labours
 Far away from all held dear.

Yet it proves the proverb truly
 Tells that joy and grief are neighbours,
 For from eyes that grow unruly
 Slowly wells a glist'ning tear.

Present sorrows wings are taking,
 Pleasant memories are waking,
 And Life's sun bedecks with splendour
 Her whom duty called to roam;
 Yet the sympathy that's hidden
 In those lines so sweet and tender
 Makes the tears rise up unbidden
 O'er the welcome "news from home."



THE SAILOR BOY'S RETURN.

WHO is she with the grief-blanch'd tresses
 Wandering so oft by the murmuring sea?
 Her cheeks are pale, but her glance expresses
 A hope as constant as hope can be.
 When fiercest tempests sweep o'er the ocean,
 Wringing her hands while the breakers roar—
 In calm and storm with such fond devotion
 Watching the ship till it reach the shore.

Who is she, that no loving fingers
 Have bound her tangle of silvery hair?
 Some lonely mother, perhaps, who lingers,
 Awaiting the child of her love and care;
 For seeing white sails in the distance gleaming,
 Her white cheeks glow, and she shrieks with joy—
 "He comes! he comes! with his blue eyes beaming,
 And bright locks dancing—my darling boy!"

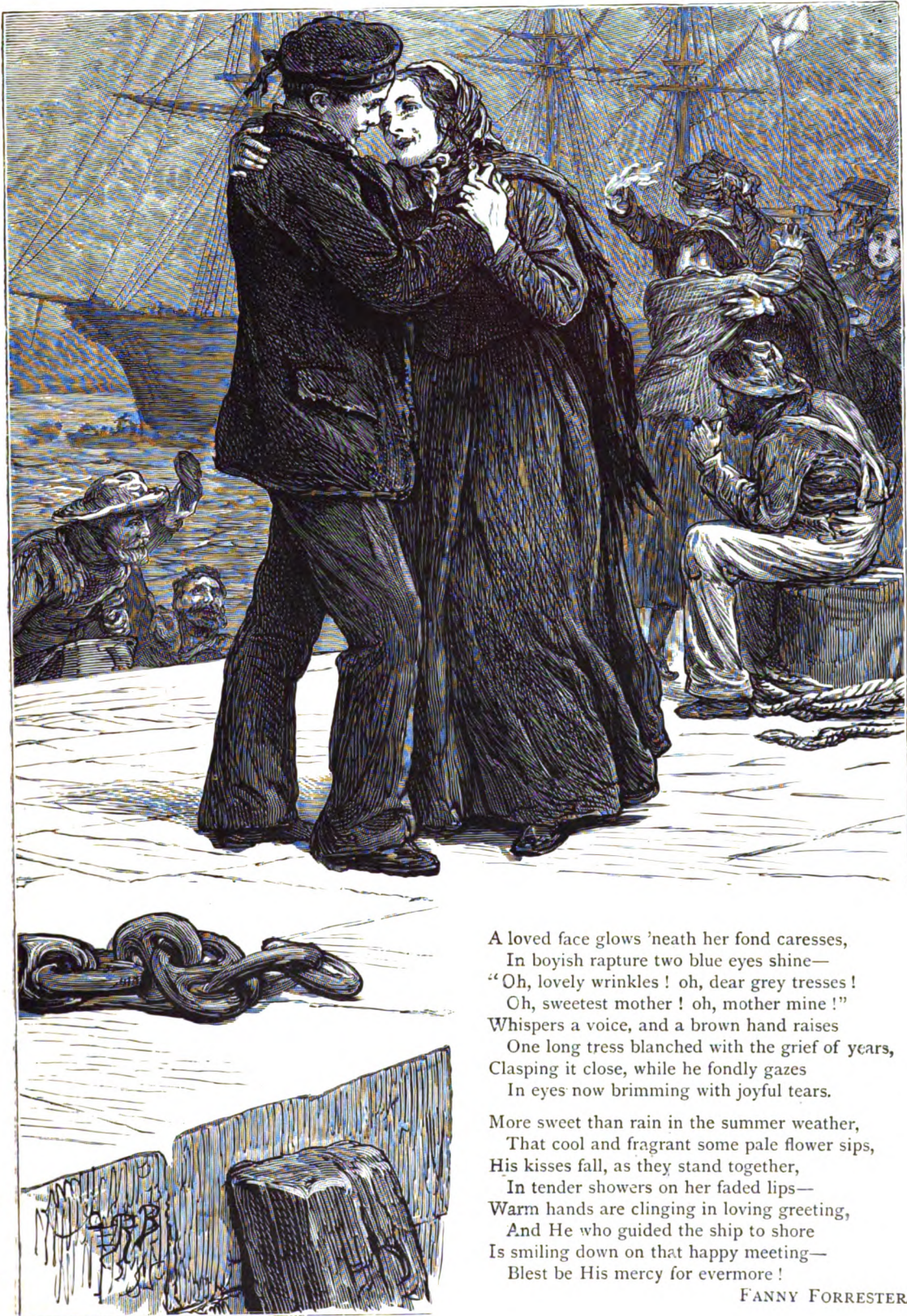
"For very gladness the waves are leaping,
 The sun is rising to show me now
 How fair he looks with the salt breeze sweeping
 The yellow locks from his radiant brow—
 Ah, b'less'd sun, to these dim eyes showing
 The brightest form on that crowded deck!
 Ah, throbbing heart, that beats proudly, knowing
 Whose picture hangs round his sun-browned neck!"

"How long his voyage, how lone, how dreary,
 And how my darling must yearn for rest!
 So let me haste, for my boy is weary,
 And fold him close to my longing breast—
 I shall not fear when the nights grow colder,
 Though winter tempests blow wild and bleak,
 For I shall lean on his strong young shoulder,
 And feel his breath on my faded cheek."

"The black clouds shook with the angry thunder,
That dark, dark morn when he sailed away—
The sea-gulls screamed in their frightened wonder—
Red lightning flashed on the ocean spray.
Now sky and billow are smiling brightly,
In loving greeting the sea-gulls call,
With wings that dazzle, they gleam so whitely—
They welcome my treasure, my love, my all !

"Morn, noon, and night hath my voice ascended
To Him who ruleth the surging wave ;
He heard my prayers, and His love defended
My sailor darling so true and brave.
Young lads and lasses turn out to meet him,
With shell and sea-weed the children run,
And, oh, I hear, as they loudly greet him,
Three ringing cheers for the widow's son !"





A loved face glows 'neath her fond caresses,
 In boyish rapture two blue eyes shine—
 "Oh, lovely wrinkles! oh, dear grey tresses!
 Oh, sweetest mother! oh, mother mine!"
 Whispers a voice, and a brown hand raises
 One long tress blanched with the grief of years,
 Claspings it close, while he fondly gazes
 In eyes now brimming with joyful tears.

More sweet than rain in the summer weather,
 That cool and fragrant some pale flower sips,
 His kisses fall, as they stand together,
 In tender showers on her faded lips—
 Warm hands are clinging in loving greeting,
 And He who guided the ship to shore
 Is smiling down on that happy meeting—
 Blest be His mercy for evermore!

FANNY FORRESTER.



TO SLEEP.

A SONNET.

BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
 One after one ; the sound of rain,
 and bees
 Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds,
 and seas,

Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky.

I've thought of all by turns ; and still I lie

Sleepless ; and soon the small birds' melodies

Must hear, first utter'd from my orchard trees ;

And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.

Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,

And could not win thee, Sleep, by any stealth :

So do not let me wear to-night away ;

Without thee what is all the morning's wealth ?

Come, blessèd barrier betwixt day and day,

Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !



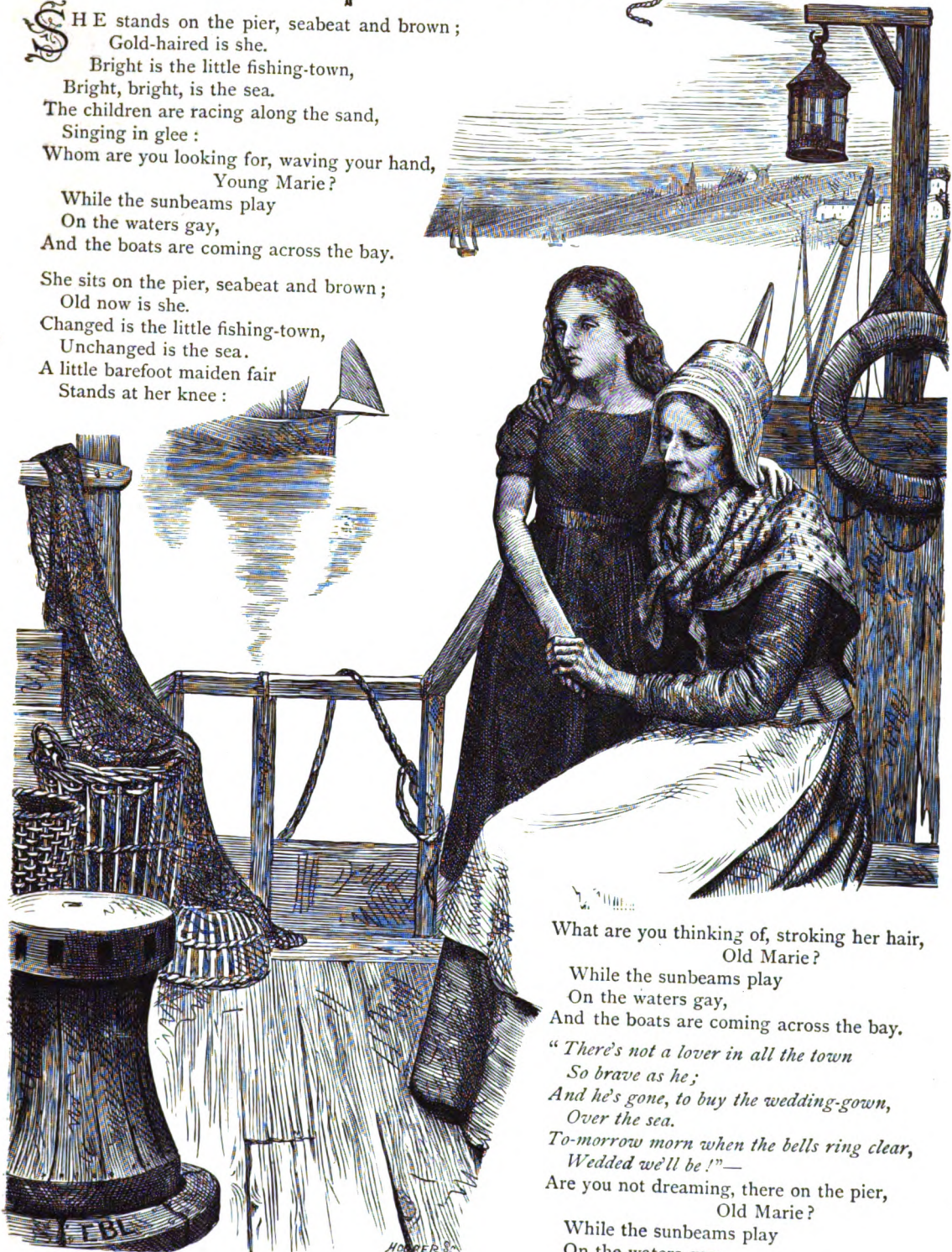
The Old & the Young Marie.

SHE stands on the pier, seabeat and brown;
Gold-haired is she.

Bright is the little fishing-town,
Bright, bright, is the sea.
The children are racing along the sand,
Singing in glee:
Whom are you looking for, waving your hand,
Young Marie?

While the sunbeams play
On the waters gay,
And the boats are coming across the bay.

She sits on the pier, seabeat and brown;
Old now is she.
Changed is the little fishing-town,
Unchanged is the sea.
A little barefoot maiden fair
Stands at her knee:



What are you thinking of, stroking her hair,
Old Marie?

While the sunbeams play
On the waters gay,
And the boats are coming across the bay.

"There's not a lover in all the town

So brave as he;
And he's gone, to buy the wedding-gown,
Over the sea.

To-morrow morn when the bells ring clear,
Wedded we'll be!"—

Are you not dreaming, there on the pier,
Old Marie?

While the sunbeams play
On the waters gay,
And the boats are coming across the bay.

FREDERICK E. WEATHERLY.



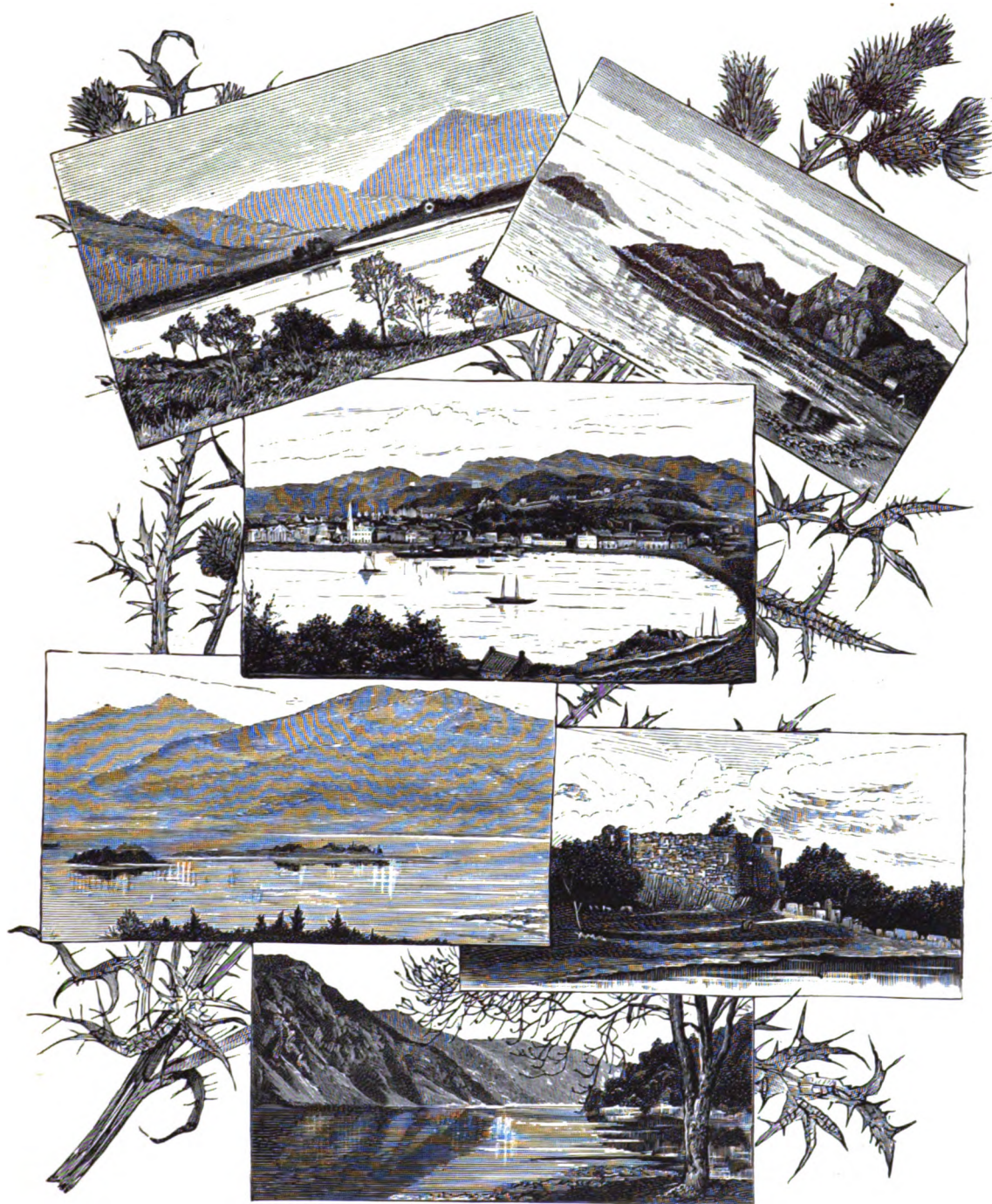
DAY-BREAK.

A BOAT sailed out on the ebbing tide,
 To toil all night for fish in the sea ;
 The sails were set as she floated free,
 And tossed the foaming waves aside ;
 And the fisherman said, as he sailed away,
 " I come not back till the break of day."

The wind arose, and the sea was wild,
 And the angry waves obeyed the gale ;
 The fisherman thought, as he furled the sail,
 Of a cottage home, of wife and child ;
 And he said, as he toiled, " O God, I pray
 Thou wilt keep me safe till the break of day."


The morning sun broke over the sea,
 But never a boat on its bosom lay,
 And all but one were in the bay ;
 Oh ! where could the boat and the fisher be ?—
 The fisherman's soul had sailed away
 As the dawn was breaking of Endless Day.







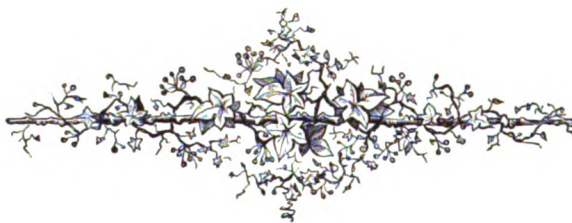
DISENCHANTMENT.



 THE near approach of happy spring,
 The bloom and beauty she will bring,
 The sunrise on the eastern sea,
 These things have lost their charm for me.

The rapt repose of autumn days,
 The chequered light in woodland ways,
 The brilliant stars above the sea,
 These things have lost their charm for me.

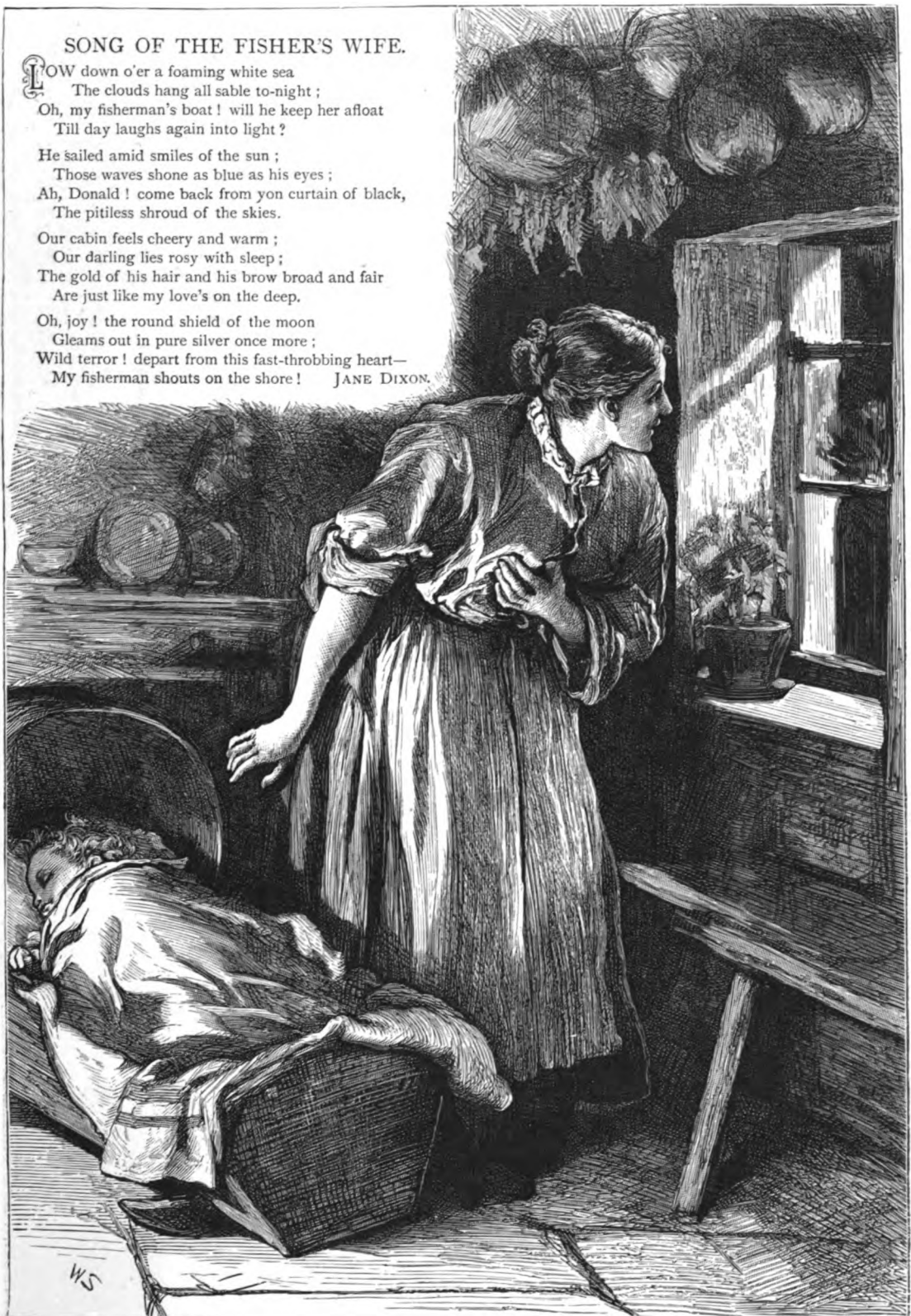
Alas ! I have no heart to sing,
 The joys these joyous seasons bring ;
 He sleeps in death beneath the sea,
 And life has lost its charm for me.



SONG OF THE FISHER'S WIFE.

TOW down o'er a foaming white sea
 The clouds hang all sable to-night ;
 Oh, my fisherman's boat ! will he keep her afloat
 Till day laughs again into light ?
 He sailed amid smiles of the sun ;
 Those waves shone as blue as his eyes ;
 Ah, Donald ! come back from yon curtain of black,
 The pitiless shroud of the skies.
 Our cabin feels cheery and warm ;
 Our darling lies rosy with sleep ;
 The gold of his hair and his brow broad and fair
 Are just like my love's on the deep.
 Oh, joy ! the round shield of the moon
 Gleams out in pure silver once more ;
 Wild terror ! depart from this fast-throbbing heart—
 My fisherman shouts on the shore !

JANE DIXON.





ASKED AND ANSWERED.

WHAT, or of whom, does my lady think,
My lady so shy and so sweet,
As she casts soft crumbs, on the river's brink,
To the swan at her dainty feet?

Does she think how proud the white swan must be
Of her smiles and her care for him—not me?

Of what, or of whom, does my lady speak
In those murmurs loving and low,
With the timid tint on her maiden cheek
Faintly limned in the wave below?
Blush for the river, caress for the bird,
Yet for me, her lover, nor blush nor word.

Of what, or of whom, does my lady dream,
As the river goes gliding by?
Does she see two forms in the glassy stream,

Or only herself and the sky?
Can she see how the shadows melt and blend,
Yet hold me apart, as—only a friend?

For what, or for whom, does my lady sigh,
Swan and river left far behind?
Can it be for that which is waiting nigh—
A true love's heart with hers to bind?—
Is there a bird in the boughs overhead
Could tell what beneath them is sighed or said?

Of what, or of whom, does the lover dream,
Pulling home in his peerless boat?
Of moon, or of clouds, or winding stream,
With the gladdest heart afloat?
He knows for whom were the blush and the sigh,
And all that was meant in the whispers shy.



IN A HAYFIELD.

BEFORE the mower's sweeping scythe
The dewy grasses bend and fall;
A group of children, gay and blithe,
Amid the hay keep carnival:
While rising high, in azure sky,
The morning sun shines lovingly.

The flowers and grasses slowly fade,
And o'er their wreaths the children sigh;
A maiden sees in ev'ry blade
Emblems of hopes but born to die:
Yet in the sky, still rising high,
The golden sun shines lovingly.

The mower works with haggard eyes,
For bitter grief is in his breast;
A lark flies up with startled cries—
The scythe has swept away her nest:
Yet, risen high in deep blue sky,
The sun still shines on lovingly.

From ivied church the mourners go
(The sun is sinking in the west);
The mower Death has laid one low,
With fading flowers to be at rest:
Yet in the sky, 'mid smile and sigh,
The sun shines ever lovingly.

G. W.



THE SILENT THRUSH.

POOR thrush! you sit in your wicker cage and stare throughout the day;
 You know that you are bound with bars, and cannot fly away;
 And you do not beat the feathers from your wings for freedom now,
 As you did when you were taken from the swinging beechen bough;
 Though you can hear your merry mates a-singing in the lane,
 You sit all day in silence, in the sun or in the rain,
 And remind me of the ancient king who never laughed again.

I wonder, melancholy thrush, if you remember aught
 Of your partner, and your pleasures in the woods, ere
 you were caught?
 Of the dainty fare in fresh fields, of a nest in shelter-
 ing green—
 Do you remember anything of sweet things that have
 been?
 Of mornings in the June-tide when the sun came o'er
 the hill?
 For sure you know all is not well—some sort of
 sorrows fill
 That little feathered frame of yours, else why are you
 so still?

Do you wish that I would go away? It may be I
 intrude,
 But you should not turn your tail to me, for that is
 rather rude;
 Do you think I'm talking nonsense? that the ill of
 men or birds
 Is not to be made lighter by mere sentimental words?
 If that is what you mean, my little friend, it may be so;
 No doubt you think if I have pity for you in your woe,
 I might help instead of talk—undo the door, and let
 you go?

And so I will, my lonely friend, for you often make me
 sad
 When I sit and see you silent while the other birds are
 glad;
 There! be at liberty; the good deed is better than the
 word,
 And I feel some blessing on me for helping but a
 bird;
 Ah! now you are as happy as a little thrush may be;
 You look this way as you sing loud upon the apple-
 tree,
 And I know that you are singing out your sweetest
 thanks to me.

GUY ROSLYN.



A SON'S KISS IN THE SUNSHINE.

TWO little arms around a neck so white ;
 Two little ruby lips that warmly kiss ;
 Two pale pink lips that, wilfully remiss,
 Strive to escape them, dodging left and right ;
 Two eyes of azure, dancing with delight,
 Bright as the sunshine, swimming o'er with bliss,
 Gazing into the fathomless abyss
 Of hazel eyes with soul sun-radiance bright ;
 A little *nez retroussé*, though but slight
 Is its divergence from true symmetry ;
 Two tiny ears ; clusters of curls that fight
 Like warring waves ; two rosy cheeks ; a wee
 White dimpled chin : the whole as fair a sight
 As ever mortal might expect to see !

So thinks the grey, grave man, who stoops
 To fasten in his daughter's hair
 The rose he holds—the rose that droops
 In the warm summer air,
 And faintly breathes a perfumed prayer—
 That round the honey-sweetness at her breast
 Folds her pale petals—nestles softly there,
 And sinks to rest !
 So in the stillness of the night,
 With folded hands, and downbent head,
 The mother in her robe of white,
 Kneeling beside her bed,
 Utters the prayer so often said—
 Then folds her sweet son fondly to her breast,
 Pillowing gently there his curly head,
 And sinks to rest !

THE DAWN WILL COME.

<p>THE night may be dreary, and sombre and sad, And swiftly may speed the wild rack in the sky ; The ocean may roar on the wave-beaten shore, But the dawn of the bright golden morning is nigh !</p>	<p>The bitterest sorrow may gather around, And banish the smile to give place to a tear ; But time will relieve all who tremble and grieve, For the dawn of the sweet-smiling morning is near !</p>
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<p>The tempest may gather, and thunder may roll, And the frightened birds hide from the lightning's sheen ; But far in the east, from its slumber released, The dawn of the bright golden morning is seen !</p>	<p>Then do not despair, O ye weary and sad, For joy will disperse e'en the shade of a sigh ; Bright days will come back, and the night and the rack Will flee when the dawn of the morning is nigh !</p>
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EDWARD OXENFORD.

BUT PARTLY READ.

I OPENED once some quaint romance,
 And reading, fast the moments flew ;
 But, hindered by some trifling chance,
 I failed to read the volume through.

And now 'tis years ago, and life
 Seems long as I that time recall ;
 I know it was some tale of strife,
 And lives were made to climb and fall.

I still remember with what zest
 I read, and guessed the secret part ;
 And now would like to learn the rest,
 But greater wonders move my heart.

Oh, friends of yore ! oh, sacred band !
 Forsaken, scattered, changed and dead,
 How, in my lonely heart, ye stand
 Like tales of youth but partly read !

WILFRED WOOLLAM.





FINAL FAITH.

D SWEET and bitter, sad and true !
 I love you still and only you :
 Betrayed, forsaken, is it strange
 That love is love and cannot change ?

O vain regret ! the days depart :
 And, day by day, the faithful heart,
 That loves you still, is full of pain
 For days that will not come again.

O fond and fickle, false and fair :
 Do you recall the days that were,
 And think of these without a thrill
 Of pain for one who loves you still ?

O last and first ! the songs of love
 Are full of faith on lips above :
 And, having loved you, is it strange
 I love you still and cannot change ?

J. R. EASTWOOD.

A LOCK OF HAIR.

I SAW the wind toss her long auburn hair,
 As, with her sister, on the breezy pier
 She joyful walked, bright-eyed and free from
 care ;
 Oh, how the gale waved her girl-tresses dear !

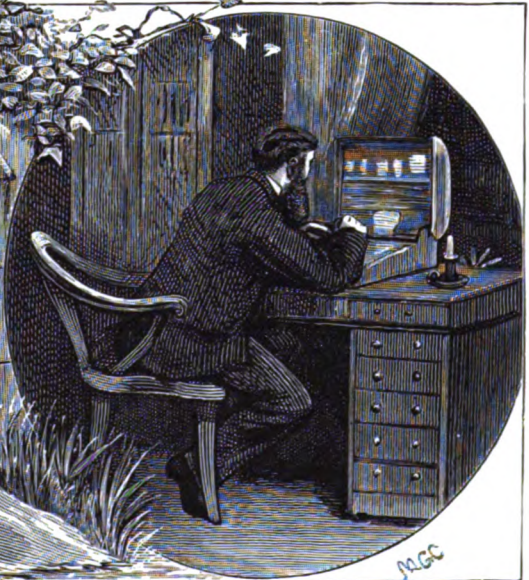
Time passed : I met her at her father's home ;
 And, while on her meek head shone suns benign,
 In summer lanes, where lovers love to roam,
 I timorously asked, "Wilt thou be mine?"

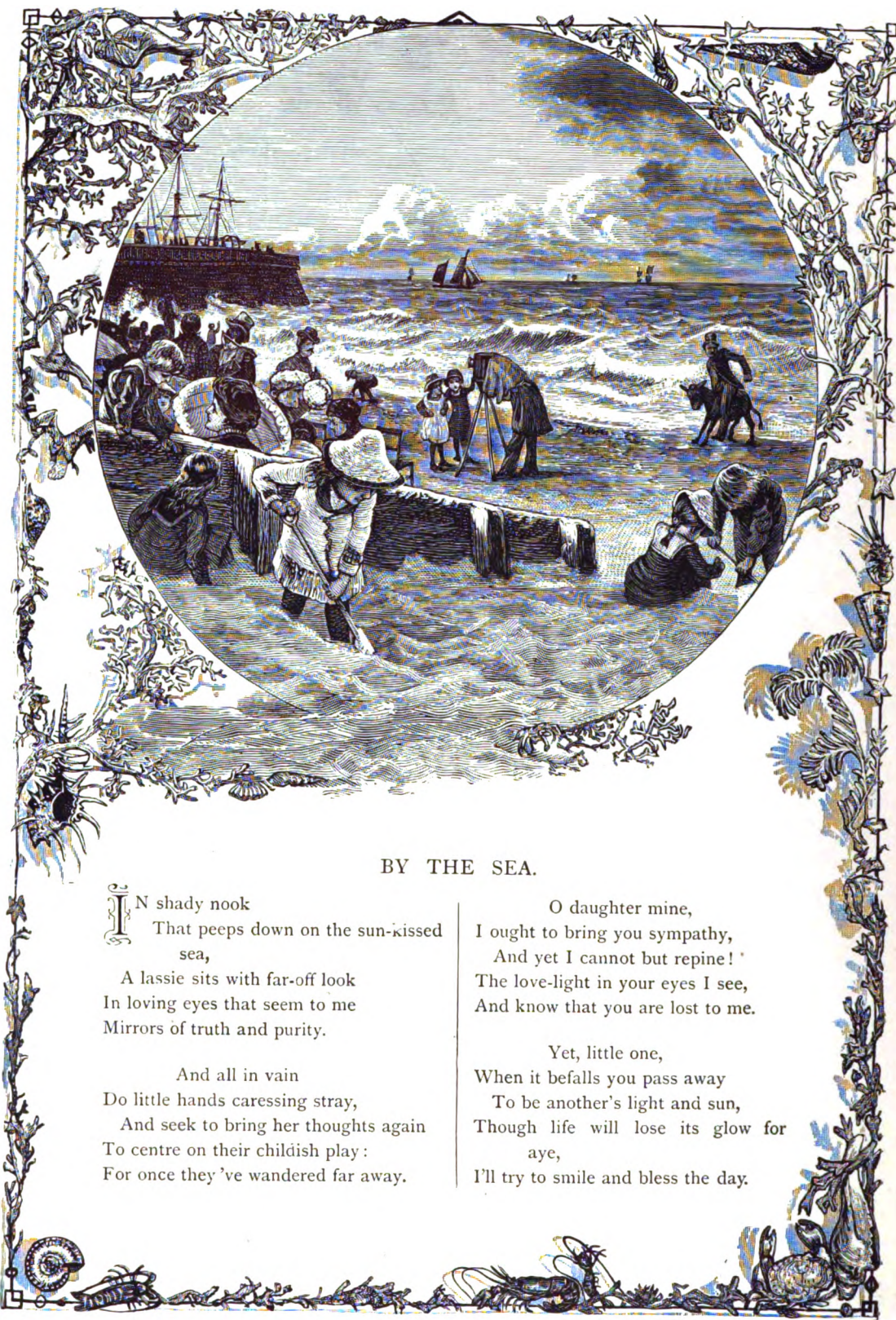


Months rolled : and one day to the grey church-door
 She drove with troops of friends, and clad as bride
 She walked, observed by all ; bride's veil she wore,
 And in some pretty way her locks were tied.

The other night I touched a secret spring
 In a gift-desk, and in the little drawer
 I spied a knot of hair twined round a ring ;
 How grey it seemed ! I wept—could look no more.

H. BADHAM.





BY THE SEA.

IN shady nook
That peeps down on the sun-kissed
sea,

A lassie sits with far-off look
In loving eyes that seem to me
Mirrors of truth and purity.

And all in vain
Do little hands caressing stray,
And seek to bring her thoughts again
To centre on their childish play:
For once they've wandered far away.

O daughter mine,
I ought to bring you sympathy,
And yet I cannot but repine!
The love-light in your eyes I see,
And know that you are lost to me.

Yet, little one,
When it befalls you pass away
To be another's light and sun,
Though life will lose its glow for
aye,
I'll try to smile and bless the day.



MILL SONGS

I.
THE MILL.

Through the woods the breeze is blowing,
In the meads the flowers are springing,
And the ploughman homeward going
Listens to the brooklet's singing.

Through the arched bridge darts the
Dragon-flies 'mongst reeds and lilies
Hear the river whispering, "Follow!
Not far off the water-mill is."

In the stream the wheel is dipping,
Round it silver foam is slipping;
Music rises in the roaring
Of the waters wildly pouring.

In melodious circles surging,
Far and farther yet diverging,
River-song is put in motion
That floats onward to the ocean.

II.
THE MILLER.

Merrily, O merrily,
The mill-wheel turns to-day,
With splash and dash,
And merry crash,
For the miller's heart is gay.

Wearily, O wearily,
There came at eventide
A maiden fair,
With shining hair,
Over the dark hill-side.

Cheerily, O cheerily,
The miller spake; quoth he,
"Great joy were mine
Didst thou incline,
Sweet maid, my bride to be."

Joyfully, O joyfully,
The maiden spake her "Yea,"
And the bells rang soon
A merry tune
For the miller's wedding-day.

Now lustily, O lustily,
The miller singeth he;
His voice keeps time
With the water's chime,
And his heart from care is free.

Merrily, O merrily,
The mill-wheel whirls around,
With splash and dash,
And merry crash,
For the miller joy hath found.

III.

EVENING AT THE MILL.

In the mill-pool stars are peeping,
In their nests the birds are sleeping,
O'er the earth the dew is creeping;
Night is coming; all is still;
Hushed is the wheel of the water-mill.

Slow the owl his flight is winging,
Mist-wreaths round the yews are clinging,
And the miller's wife is singing
Lullaby, in crooning wise,
To the babe that cradled lies.





IV.

CRADLE SONG.

SLEEP, baby, sleep; the stars so bright
Are angel-eyes that watch at night
That none may harm thee;
Their sparkling light makes mimic day,
To chase the shadows dark away,
Lest they alarm thee.
Then lullaby, O lullaby!
Thy mother's singing thee to sleep;
The holy angels, hovering nigh,
My baby will in safety keep.
Lullaby!

Sleep, baby, sleep; the gentle breeze
That rustles through the forest trees,
Down-bending,
Is but an angel, whispering joy
And blessings on my baby-boy,
And kisses sending.
Then, lullaby, O lullaby!
Thy mother's singing thee to sleep;
The holy angels, hovering nigh,
My baby will in safety keep.
Lullaby!



V.

SONG OF THE MILLER'S MEN.

Heigho! for the miller;
A jolly miller is he;
He is the best of masters,
And the best of men are we.
Splash! splash! how the waters pour
Over the mill-wheel, with merry roar,
Charming red gold into the mill.
Of the jovial master of the mill.
Heigho! for the miller; a jolly miller is he;
He is the best of masters, and the best of men are we.

Heigho! for the husbandman,
Who sows the seed in spring;
Heigho! for the sun and showers,
That the seed to ripeness bring.
A finer sight than a field of wheat,
That rolls in billows of gold,
All under the blue of the August skies,
Men's eyes need never behold.
Grind! grind! How the wheel turns round,
Dashing and crashing with merry sound,
Charming red gold into the mill.
Of the jovial master of the mill.
Heigho! for the miller; a jolly miller is he;
He is the best of masters, and the best of men are we.

Heigho! for the rich and poor,
Who eat their bread at our hand.
Ho! where would old England be
If no millers were in the land?
A jollier life than ours, and one
More useful, nobody knows;
And so we work with might and main,
While gaily the mill-wheel goes.
Splash! splash! How the waters bright
Play round the wheel with a silver light,
Charming red gold into the mill.
Of the jovial master of the mill.
Heigho! for the miller; a jolly miller is he;
He is the best of masters, and the best of men are we.

VI.

MIDNIGHT.

NIGHT hath spread her ebon wings,
Hushed is now the wind's soft breath;
Mortals lie in mystic chains,
Shadowing forth the bands of death
Not a sound is heard a-nigh,
Save the waters' solemn flow,
That a ceaseless lullaby
Sing for ever as they go.
Sleeps the miller's household now,
After toil by love made light,
In the bliss of well-earned rest,
Dreaming through the quiet night.
Dreams the miller of his hoards,
Dreams the mother of her boy,
Dreams the babe of cherubs fair,
In a baby-world of joy.
Overhead, the angels watch
O'er the earth that lies so still,
Whilst the shades of midnight close
Peacefully around the mill.

JULIA GODDARD.





THE OLD HOME.

THE GARDEN.

Beneath the brow of a wild breezy down
 Studded with yellow gorse and feathery fern,
 Between two grassy paths, that winding turn
 And merge together just above the town—
 There, sheltered by a leafy belt of trees,
 Whose well-trained boughs entwine and interlace,
 A little garden, rich in summer grace,
 Slopes down to meet the soft, warm southern breeze,
 And revels in a wealth of fragrant flowers,
 Whose petals hum with buzzing of the bees
 That make the honeyed cups their sunny bowers,
 And thither swarm from far-off downs and leas—
 A garden this where languor overpowers,
 And dreamy murmurs tell of rest and ease

THE COTTAGE.

Above the garden, where the steep incline
 Ends sharply, merging in the level down—
 There, facing southwards towards the busy town,
 A cottage stands embowered with trailing vine,
 Rose, honeysuckle, and sweet eglantine,
 That round the lattice windows climb and creep,
 And hang in clusters o'er the porch, and peep
 Through every casement pane, and close entwine
 Blossoms and fruit in thick luxuriant grace ;
 And all the house within is glad and bright,
 And dancing rays of golden-tinted light
 Flicker about the rooms ; while borne along
 The sound of bees and birds wafts through the place,
 And fills the burdened air with drowsy song.

G. W.



A LITTLE bird, a little love,
 Flew down to me from skies above,
 And lighting on my window-sill,
 A sweet surprise, it sang of Lil.

The crimson feathers round its throat
 Were stirr'd with ev'ry thrilling note
 Of carol music soft and clear :
 A sight to see, a song to hear.

A little bird, a little love,
 Came flying down from skies above,
 And perching on my window-sill,
 It tapped the pane with news of Lil.

It came but once and flew away ;
 But now I know from day to day,
 That we are close though far apart—
 Close to each other, close at heart.



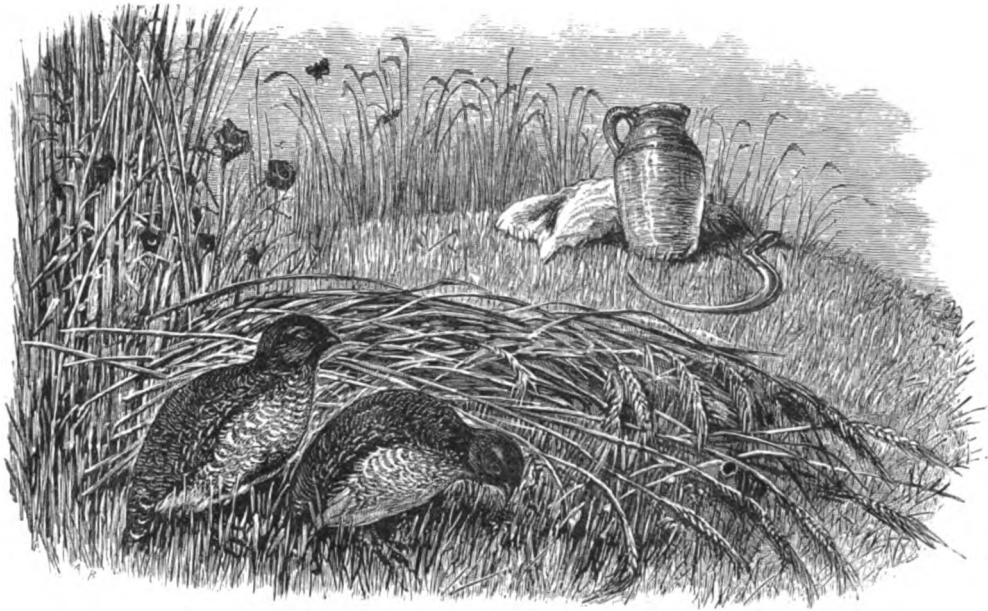


WHEN SUMMER GOES.

WHEN Summer goes—then shadows creep
 Across the world of trees and flowers ;
 The birds a solemn silence keep
 Through Autumn's slowly-darkening hours,
 And swiftly fades each lingering rose,
 When Summer goes.

When Summer goes—then disappears
 Life's joyous youth : a goodly store
 Of spring-tide hopes, and dreams, and fears,
 And joys that will return no more ;
 Life's sun a deeper shadow throws
 When Summer goes.

When Summer goes—still strength remains
 To bear whatever time may bring ;
 For truer, deeper courage reigns
 Though man may have no heart to sing ;
 And day by day Faith stronger grows,
 When Summer goes.

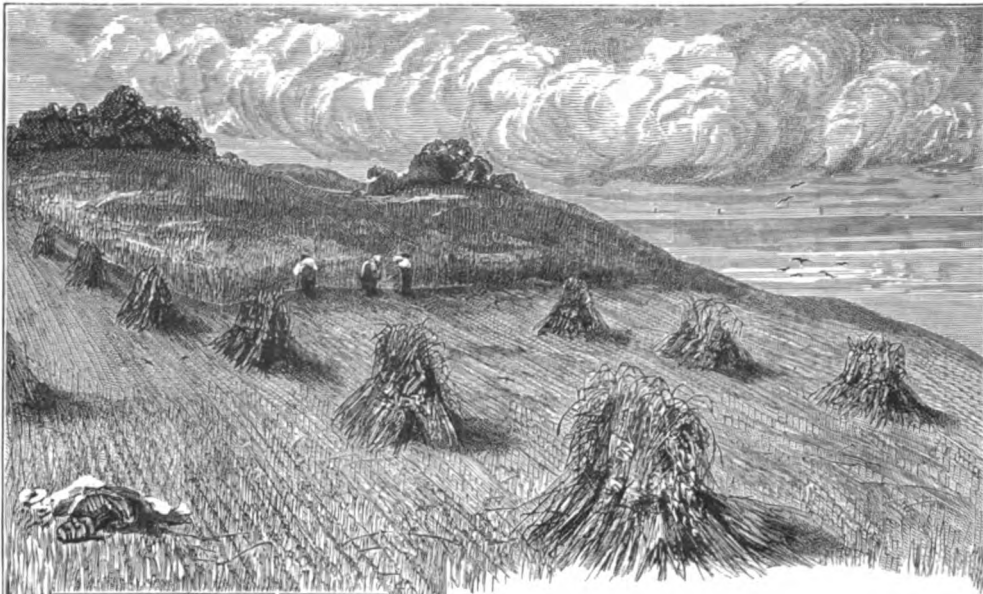


THE AUTUMN OF LIFE.



WHEN seas of wheat are rustling far and wide,
 And homeward go the heavy-laden wains ;
 When berries redden in the woods and lanes,
 And orchards, dotted o'er the country-side,
 Yield up their wealth of fruit with blush of pride ;
 When every tree a richer russet gains,
 Until no trace of summer green remains—
 Then is the glad year's golden Autumn-tide.

And when men see some fruit of work well done,
 When something of earth's happiness is won,
 And they begin to dream of rest from strife ;
 When children fill the home, and day by day
 All youthful dreams of glory fade away—
 Then is the mellow Autumn-tide of Life.

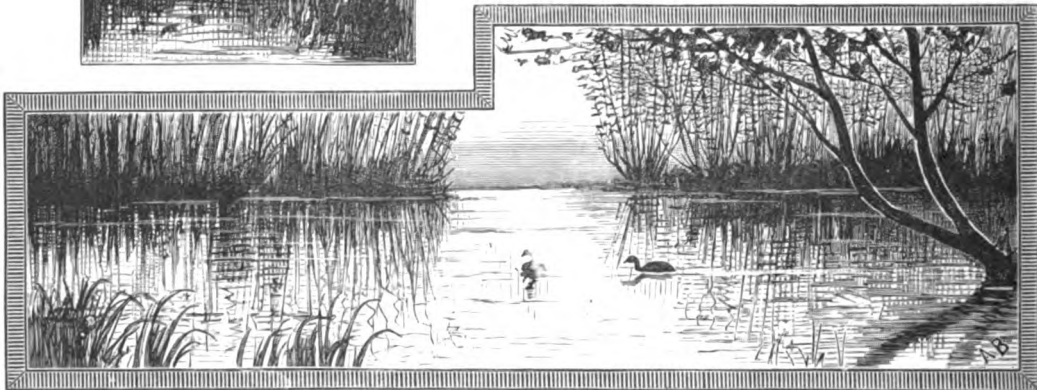


AUTUMN.

SHE passes by, a dusky queen,
In trailing robes of amber drest,
Crowned with the radiance of the west,
A stately step, a modest mien.

And gladly shines o'er many lands
The golden sun, his softened rays
Wreathing a many-tinted haze
Above the headland where she stands.

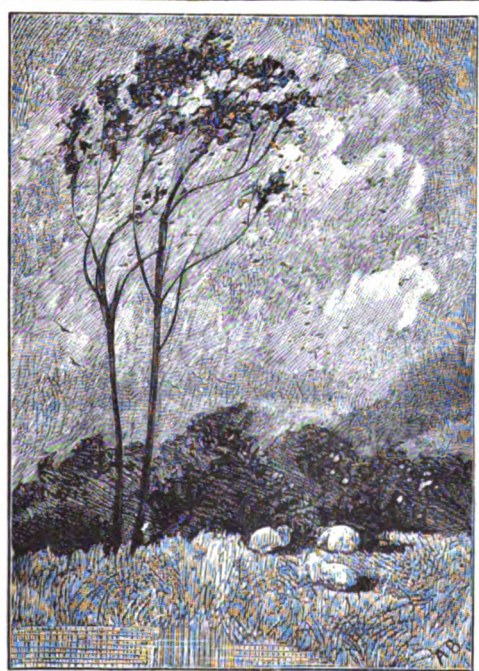
The osiers in the valley sigh,
The clover blushes where she treads,
And crimson poppies lift their heads
To bloom afresh as she goes by.





The corn-fields stretch like fruitful plains
On either side ; the joyous earth
Laughs back the happy farmer's mirth,
Who sees rich harvest for his pains.

And heavy 'gainst the garden wall,
Which smiles athwart a southern sky,
The over-fruited pear-trees lie,
The purple grapes in clusters fall.

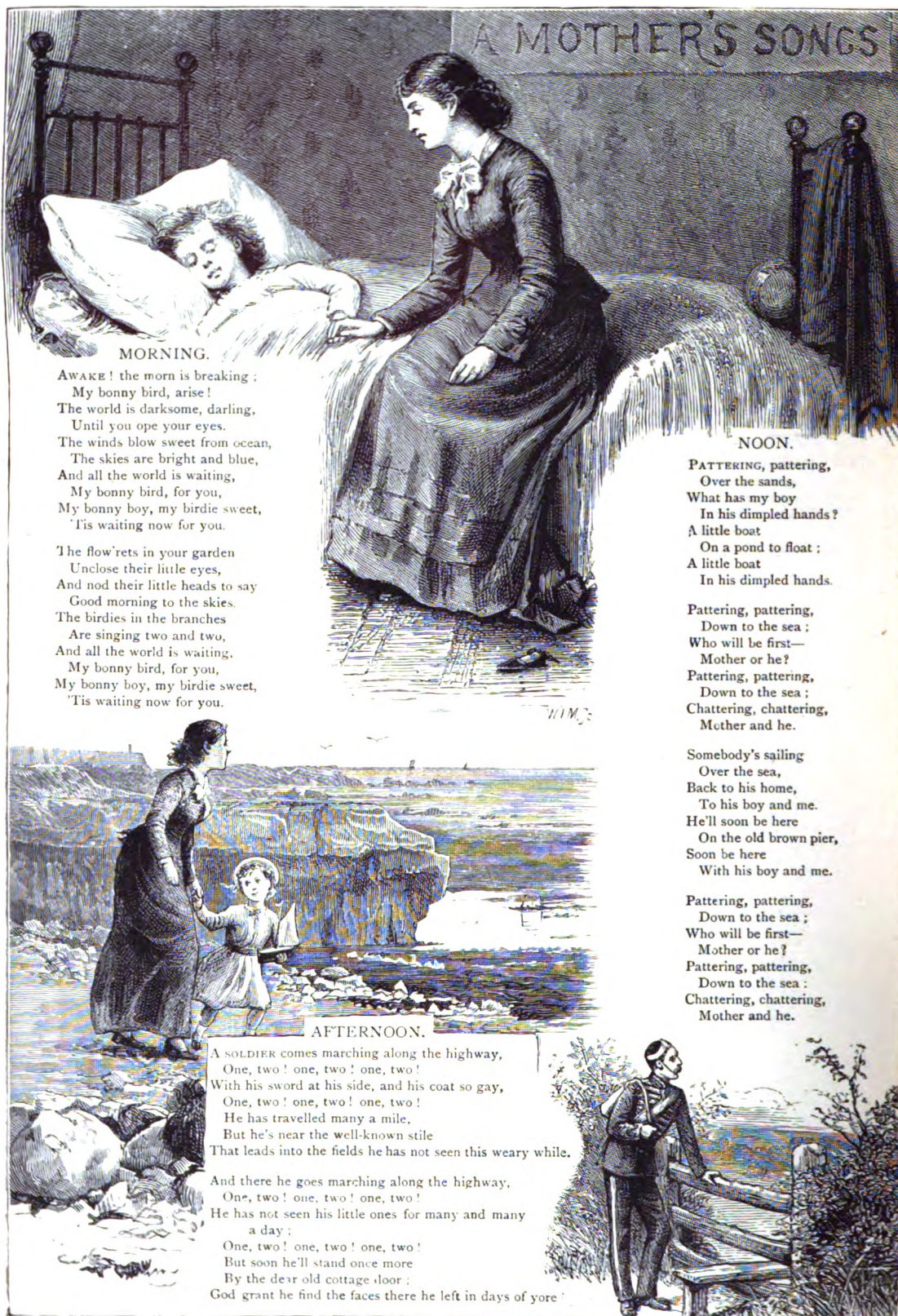


Then rich and poor alike rejoice
That God again the earth did bless,
And kneel in humble thankfulness
To sing His praise with heart and voice ;

While she, the mellow Autumn Queen,
Hid in her dusky mantle's shade,
Steals softly through the deep'ning glade
With stately step and modest mien ;

Fades like a vision sweet and strange,
Steals from us as our youthful prime,
And leaves us chilly winter time,
To whisper of eternal change !

H.



MORNING.

AWAKE! the morn is breaking;
 My bonny bird, arise!
 The world is darksome, darling,
 Until you ope your eyes.
 The winds blow sweet from ocean,
 The skies are bright and blue,
 And all the world is waiting,
 My bonny bird, for you,
 My bonny boy, my birdie sweet,
 'Tis waiting now for you.

The flow'rets in your garden
 Unclose their little eyes,
 And nod their little heads to say
 Good morning to the skies.
 The birdies in the branches
 Are singing two and two,
 And all the world is waiting,
 My bonny bird, for you,
 My bonny boy, my birdie sweet,
 'Tis waiting now for you.

NOON.

PATTERING, pattering,
 Over the sands,
 What has my boy
 In his dimpled hands?
 A little boat
 On a pond to float;
 A little boat
 In his dimpled hands.

Pattering, pattering,
 Down to the sea;
 Who will be first—
 Mother or he?
 Pattering, pattering,
 Down to the sea;
 Chattering, chattering,
 Mother and he.

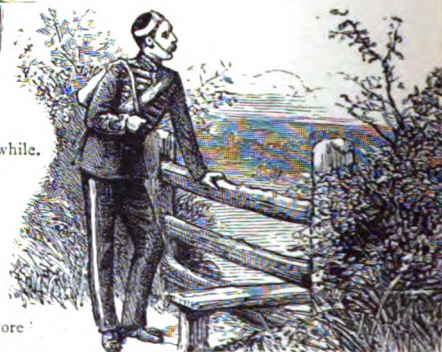
Somebody's sailing
 Over the sea,
 Back to his home,
 To his boy and me.
 He'll soon be here
 On the old brown pier,
 Soon be here
 With his boy and me.

Pattering, pattering,
 Down to the sea;
 Who will be first—
 Mother or he?
 Pattering, pattering,
 Down to the sea;
 Chattering, chattering,
 Mother and he.

AFTERNOON.

A SOLDIER comes marching along the highway,
 One, two! one, two! one, two!
 With his sword at his side, and his coat so gay,
 One, two! one, two! one, two!
 He has travelled many a mile,
 But he's near the well-known stile
 That leads into the fields he has not seen this weary while.

And there he goes marching along the highway,
 One, two! one, two! one, two!
 He has not seen his little ones for many and many
 a day;
 One, two! one, two! one, two!
 But soon he'll stand once more
 By the dear old cottage door;
 God grant he find the faces there he left in days of yore!





EVENING.

GIVE me your hand, my bonny boy,
Give mother your hand;
We'll walk together, my bonny boy,
Along the yellow sand.
We'll stand beneath the lighthouse white,
And watch the tide come in:
See! see! the boats are bounding light,
And hark! the merry din.

And the sun goes down
Behind the crimson foam,
And the fishermen cheer
As the bar they clear,
Merrily ho! for home,
Sweet home!

They have toiled all day, my bonny boy,
All day long at sea,
Far, far from shore, with net and oar,
And weary they must be.
The fish are in the drag-nets brown,
They've said good-bye to sea;
There are fish for all the folk in town,
And fish for you and me.

And the sun is gone,
And faint is the crimson light,
And the fishermen stand
On the dusking sand,
To say a kind good-night,
Good-night!



TWILIGHT.

A MOTHER sat with her boy one day
Under a spreading tree,
For he had left his merry play
To sit beside her knee.
She talked to him, and he looked up
With many a grave reply—
Just as you and I, my boy,
Just as you and I.

She smiled to see his sweet surprise,
She smoothed his brown-gold hair,
And gazed into his hazel eyes,
And saw his father there;
And she was glad, and he content
To be but only nigh—
Just as you and I, my boy,
Just as you and I.

And then she softly spake to him
Of the little sister-maid,
And pointed to the churchyard dim
Where sweetly she was laid.
And then awhile they silent sat
Under the twilight sky—
Just as you and I, my boy,
Just as you and I.



NIGHT.

Now night is over land and sea,
All the weary world at rest,
And my boy is sleeping peacefully,
My birdie in his nest;
And the tender moonlight gleams
On his sweet and placid brow;
He whispers "Mother" in his dreams—
He is dreaming of me now.

And ever, in the years to be,
When I am gone away,
I know that he'll remember me,
And all his childhood's play.
When the tender moonlight gleams
On his grave and thoughtful brow,
He'll whisper "Mother" in his dreams
As lovingly as now.

FREDERICK E. WEATHERLY.



THE FEN-FOLKS' HARVEST.

BY THE REV. M. G. WATKINS, M.A.

GREY the morn, pale sunbeams lighting
 Rushy moorlands westward fly,
 Where our sluggish streams uniting
 Meet the circle of the sky ;
 Harry, loose the boat and, frightening
 Coot and moor-hen, onwards hie !

By gnarled birch and poplar straining,
 Slowly 'neath the fresh'ning breeze,
 Row we till, the reed-beds gaining,
 We can hear, like far-off seas
 Moaning sadly in the waning
 Of a storm, our sedgy leas.

Small the worth of Fen-land farming
 'Gainst the loads of golden corn
 Which at eve, 'midst children swarming,
 To the crowded yard are borne ;
 Yet our wat'ry wealth is charming
 To Fen-folks this cheerful morn.

See the serried ridges bending
 Lance-like to the rising day,
 Tipped with purple crests, each sending
 Knight-like challenge, come what may ;
 Frost-defying, beauty blending
 With much use—our winter stay.





Briskly ply the sickle, Harry,
 Level quick these rustling beds ;
 Gleaming sunshine will not tarry,
 Nor the glories autumn spreads ;
 Haste thee ! home at noon we'll carry
 Deep-dipped boat-loads to our sheils.

Soon frost's spell and snow-sheets drifted,
 Meres to fairy tracts will turn ;
 Rower's grip for fleet skates shifted,
 Then our labours' end we learn,
 When at eve day-glooms are lifted
 And low-reddening sunsets burn.

Blithely wield thy sickle, singing,
 " Oh, bright mere ! oh, yellow reeds !
 Oh, the gracious autumn bringing
 Bounteous harvest for all needs !"
 Thus with songs our labours winging,
 Cheerily the work proceeds.



HUNCHBACK JIM.

WHEN all things seem quite against me, and I
 deem my life a curse;
 When, for fancied wrongs or real, thoughts
 of discontent I nurse;
 Then I turn with softer feelings to a memory far and
 dim,
 And again, through mist and shadow, stands before me
 Hunchback Jim.

Pale and ghostly, weak and ailing, never feeling free
 from pain,
 Oh! how bitter were his sufferings, yet who heard him
 e'er complain?
 Though his sorrows grew around him, he was meek
 and patient still,
 Ever gentle in his troubles and resigned to Heaven's
 will.

I could understand his trials, for he was my friend and
 mate,
 And we worked for years together, coming early, going
 late;
 And he often would, whilst toiling, pause in pain to
 gasp for breath,
 Whilst his hands grew hot and fevered, and his face
 as pale as death.

And when I turned round to hold him, and to cool his
 burning brow,
 "Thank you, Jack," he'd smile and murmur, "thank
 you, Jack, I'm better now;"
 And while he still was speaking, he would stagger
 fall, and faint—
 Oh! what agony of suffering—yet not one word of
 complaint.

He went working on in sickness, when he should have
 been in bed,
 But he had a feeble mother who looked up to him for
 bread,
 And so on and on with patience, looking forward to
 the day
 Which should make an end to sorrow with the broken
 mould of clay.

Fate condemned him to a city, far from pleasant grove
 and rill;
 But he nursed, with mother's worship, flowers on his
 window-sill;

And he held each morn communion, in a language
 strangely sweet,
 With the little birds that fluttered, picking crumbs
 upon the street.

He had never known the music of a wife's soft loving
 tone,
 Nor the clasp of baby-fingers he could fondly call his
 own;
 But the children all around us used to gladly run to
 him,
 For they knew the loving-kindness of poor childless
 Hunchback Jim.

But at length there came the morning when I missed
 him at his place;
 On the bench his tools lay listless, mourning for the
 wonted face;
 Shadowed by a dark foreboding, drearily the daylight
 passed,
 Till uneasy, fearing, doubting, I could go to him at
 last.

There he lay—his cheek grown hollow—on his narrow
 little bed,
 And my footsteps broke the stillness with a solemn
 ghostly tread;
 Yet he sweetly smiled upon me, and he tried to rise
 and speak,
 But his tongue could give no utterance, and he fell
 back faint and weak.

Through the night the lamp burnt dimly, flick'ring
 with the throes of death,
 And I sat and grieved, and watched him, in the dull
 smoke of my breath;
 When his voice the silence startled: "It's a smiling
 land," he said,
 "And she's coming! Yes, she's coming! Jack, it's
 Freedom—she's ahead!"

Sure, no purer life did Heaven ever summon unto
 rest;
 Patience, faith, and sweet contentment dwelt within
 that gentle breast;
 Soaring happy with the angels, do I love to think of
 him,
 And I always feel the better for my thoughts of
 Hunchback Jim.

REGINALD BARNETT.







WILL'S WIDOW.

IT'S hard enough for folks to work
 For such a little pay ;
 To me it does not matter much,
 Now Will is gone away.
 The bird whose mate is flown afar
 Cares little for her nest :
 For glimpse of distant paradise
 The barest bough serves best.

A cup of tea and crust of bread
 Are quite enough for me :
 To give me dainties would be waste
 As Will's not here to see ;
 Or leastways, if he can look down
 He knows too much to care,
 Knows that it does not signify
 What people eat or wear.

If I was living in the place
 Where once I lived with Will,
 All going on the same old way,
 But just the house grown still,
 I'm sure Will would seem further off,
 So slowly time would go :
 One needn't sit to watch for death,
 That's sure to come, we know.

But now I seldom make a moan
 About the sadder part ;
 I think the moving of the hands
 Is wholesome for the heart ;
 For as I stitch, I recollect
 The happy times we had,
 Our courting days, and wedding morn,
 When every one was glad.

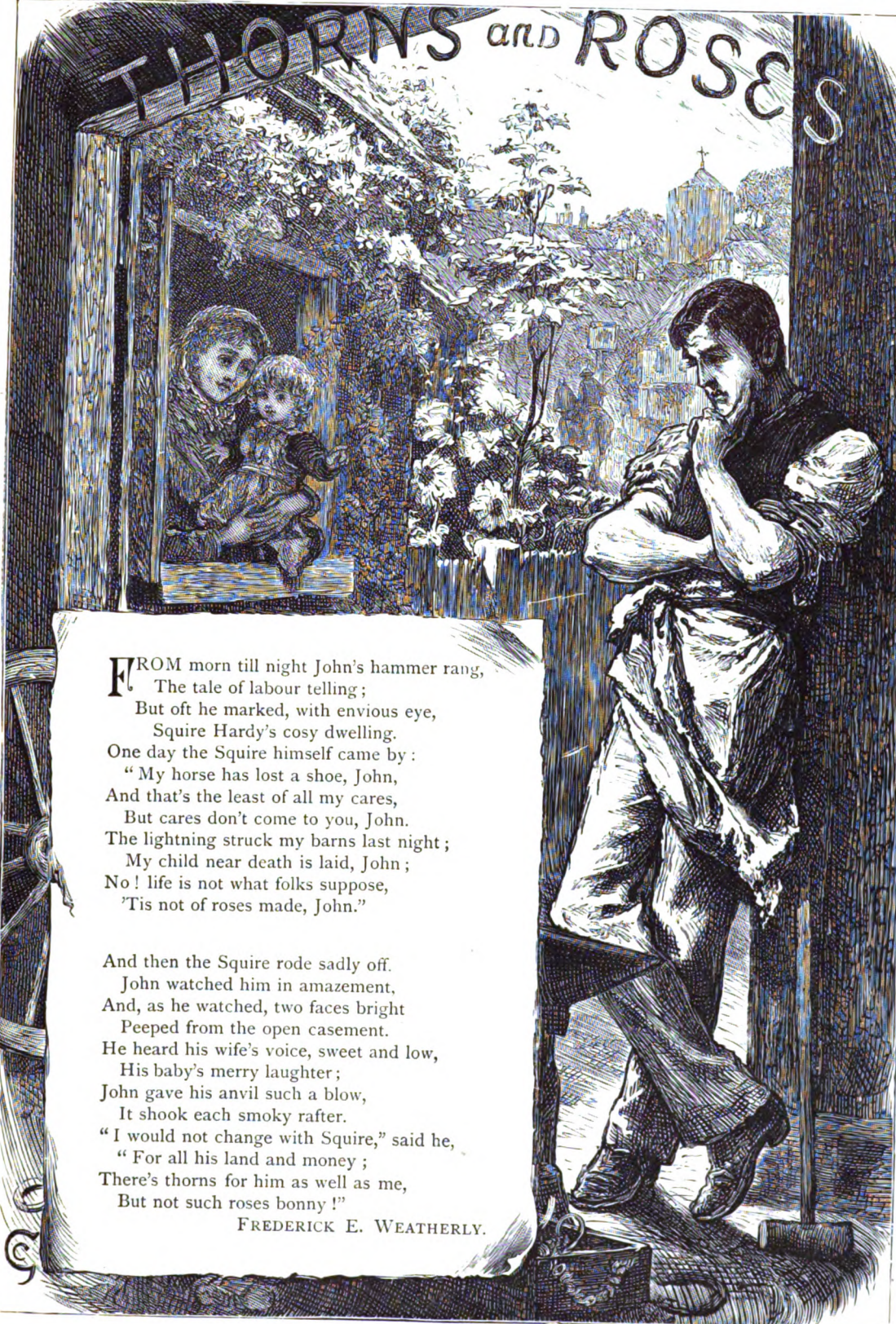
I have Will's bird to sing to me,
 And, lest it pine for trees,
 When Sunday evening's calm and fair
 I take it for a breeze.
 Will's lying not so far from this,
 And that is where we go :
 The little bird cheeps cheerily—
 I fancy it may know.

Will's buried by the old grey church
 That stands upon the moor,
 And as I can't take Dick inside,
 I listen at the door ;
 And every word the parson speaks,
 I seem to hear Will say,
 "That's something good for you, old girl"—
 For that was poor Will's way.

And all the time as I walk home
 I watch the sun go down ;
 It makes our grim old city look
 Like New Jerusalem town.
 And I have such sweet fancies come
 I never had before :
 When you've none else to talk with you,
 I think God talks the more.

When first Will went, I longed to die,
 But now I wait content ;
 As parson says, "When comforts go,
 The Comforter is sent."
 Yet, oh ! how glad I'll meet with Will,
 And tell him it came true
 When he said, "Polly, dear old girl,
 God will look after you."

THORNS and ROSES



FROM morn till night John's hammer rang,
 The tale of labour telling;
 But oft he marked, with envious eye,
 Squire Hardy's cosy dwelling.
 One day the Squire himself came by:
 "My horse has lost a shoe, John,
 And that's the least of all my cares,
 But cares don't come to you, John.
 The lightning struck my barns last night;
 My child near death is laid, John;
 No! life is not what folks suppose,
 'Tis not of roses made, John."

And then the Squire rode sadly off.
 John watched him in amazement,
 And, as he watched, two faces bright
 Peeped from the open casement.
 He heard his wife's voice, sweet and low,
 His baby's merry laughter;
 John gave his anvil such a blow,
 It shook each smoky rafter.
 "I would not change with Squire," said he,
 "For all his land and money;
 There's thorns for him as well as me,
 But not such roses bonny!"

FREDERICK E. WEATHERLY.



THE MARTINS OF PEVENSEY.

ONE drowsy day in the autumn,
 Through shadow and pleasant heat,
 I came with a quiet footstep
 Into Pevensy street.
 Over me clouds were flying,
 The breeze was gently sighing,
 The winding stream replying—
 A melody low and sweet.

Purely the song of Nature
 Fell on my eager ear,
 The happy hum of the noonday
 Flowing the heart to cheer ;
 Striking a chord of pleasure
 In life's too mournful measure,
 Giving me thoughts to treasure
 And brighten the fading year.

So musing, while the amber leaf
 Came fluttering on my view,
 Suddenly over the narrow street
 A host of martins flew—
 Their restless music swelling,
 As if each throat were telling
 Of a peaceful sunny dwelling
 Across the ocean blue.

Over the red roofs swiftly
 They swept in fitful flight,
 Soaring, eddying, diving ;
 Glossy, with gleams of white ;
 One to another calling—
 "Depart ! the leaf is falling,
 Harsh winds will soon be brawling ;
 The days bring no delight."

Some sped afar to visit
 The scenes that had charmed them most,
 And store a bright remembrance
 Of castle, and hill, and coast ;
 Where Pemsey river, flowing
 Through meads in sunlight glowing,
 Was slowly seaward going,
 By many a tide-worn post.

I thought, "To the lands of the
South
Soon you will hasten away,
Exchanging for olive and palm
Our season of solemn decay;



Pale autumn sadly waning,
Cold winter darkly reigning,
Robin alone remaining
To cheer us with his lay.

But when sweet May is bright with
buds,
And vanished frost and flood,
Come with a fresh and fragrant song,
That chimes with Nature's mood;
And she will sprinkle showers,
And paint the earth with flowers,
Increasing through the hours
The universal good."

G. S. BRODIE.

4B

SEPTEMBER.

BROWN hues begin to break the sea of green ;
 In all the valleys yellow tints prevail ;
 No more is heard the song of night-
 ingale ;

The leaves fall rustling, now, the boughs
 between.

Beneath the giant oak, at morn
 and e'en,



By limpid waters, rest the
 spotted deer ;
 The heron stands upon the
 margin near,
 And her keen eye with hunger
 grows more keen.
 The timid hare starts up with
 sudden fear
 From the brown ferns that fill
 the woodland vale ;
 And hazel nuts shake down at
 every gale,
 And thrifty squirrels store their
 winter cheer.
 The glory of the summer-time
 is past,
 And every day grows shorter
 than the last.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.



GOLD upon the hill-side, heaving like the seas,
For the corn is yellow-ripe waving in the breeze,
And in orchards apples red are weighing down the trees.

Emeralds on the lowlands where the river flows ;
In the pastures sweet and green, kine and sheep repose,
And the glittering dragon-fly like an earth-star glows.

Silver on the broad mere, 'neath the noon-day light,
While the fair-winged shallows skim the waters bright,
And the white clouds in the sky sail in airy flight.

There is brightness in the heavens, freshness in the air,
Ripeness in the teeming earth, richness everywhere,
For the world to-day is filled with all things good and fair.

Glorious Autumn ! well of thee poets sang of old,
Gathering round thee luscious fruits, wealth of grain untold,
Decking thee in regal robes of purple and of gold.

Well have limners painted thee in thy yellow hair,
Matron with thy sun-bronzed brow, thy majestic air,
Thy rounded breast, thy broad full waist, thy strong arms brown and bare.

But thou art lovelier by far than poet ever sung,
Or painter with his gorgeous dyes upon the canvas hung,
Most bountiful, most beautiful thy season-mates among.

The murmuring streams, the rustling trees, the dulcet low of herds,
The song of winds, the hum of bees, the melody of birds—

God's poets they, that chant thy praise in hymns more grand than words.

The golden morns, the crimson eves, the cloud-sprent blue of skies,
The green of meads, the yellow fields where the rich harvest lies—
God's limners they, that paint thy charms with more than artist-dyes.

Spring-tide is the year's gay youth—Summer is its prime ;
In FAITH we watch the growth of Spring—in HOPE, the Summer time ;
But mellow Autumn, like God's LOVE, showers gifts on every clime.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.



SHE SANG TO ME.

SHE sang to me, she sang to me,
 From her trellised window-pane,
 Over the cornlands by the sea,
 Till my glad heart sang again.
 She sang to me, she sang to me,
 And I ran with willing feet,
 Over the cornlands by the sea,
 To my love, my sweet.

She sang to me, she sang to me,
 We heard the sea's faint chime,
 Under the cliffs by the dusking sea,
 In the tender twilight time.
 She sang to me, she sang to me,
 In mine her dear hands lay,
 And nought to me were land and sea,
 My love was mine for aye.

She was too fair for earth and me,
 She went in her fresh, sweet bloom ;
 There is no rest on land or sea,
 But only near her tomb.
 She sings among the angels now,
 She leans from heaven above,
 She sings to me, she sings to me,
 And the sound is peace and love.

F. E. WEATHERLY.

Percy Macquod

THE SMUGGLERS' CAVE.

A STORY OF THE OLDEN TIME.

ROUND the Smugglers' Cave, both wind and wave
 Beat fierce and high to-night ;
 And the billows roar on the rocky shore,
 And the seething foam gleams bright.

Well, come home with me, away from the sea—
 You can't hear my voice through the gale—
 It's not much higher, and there by the fire
 I'll try and tell you the tale.

* * * * *



Hark ! 'neath our feet, how the surges beat,
 Tossed wildly to and fro ;
 And the wild winds groan, with hollow moan,
 Through the clefts in the cliff below.

Hist ! did you hear, full plain and clear,
 A cry and an answering hail,
 And an echoing shout, that seemed to ring out
 'Bove the howl and the shriek of the gale ?

'Tis said that still brave Smuggler Will
 Is seen in the cave beneath,
 Whene'er the storm raves, and the foaming waves
 Dash madly over the "Teeth."

Hark to the gale ! What ? you've not heard the tale
 Of the Smugglers' Cave below ?
 Of the deed of fame that gave it its name
 Full fifty years ago ?

Fifty years ago or more,
 Not a cave along the shore,
 Stretching far around the coast on either side,
 But had held full many a bale
 Never cast there in a gale,
 Never left there by the rising of the tide.

Far and wide
 Through the country lying round,
 It was well known, I'll be bound,
 That the hardy fisher-folk,
 Who seemed to thrive so well,
 Scarce ever did a spell
 O' fair and square and honest fishing on the deep ;
 But with ever-ready hand
 They would swiftly ply the oar,
 Urge their boats towards the shore,
 With rich treasures contraband,
 When other folk were lying fast asleep.

And many and many a fight,
On a dark and stormy night,
They'd have when the rev'nue men were out ;
And many and many a shave
In running for the cave,
Where the beacons glimmered faintly round about.

Well, of all the hardy men
That roved the sea-shore then,
Smuggler Will was the boldest and the best ;
For though at smuggling none so brave,
None so daring on the wave,
He'd a wealth of human-kindness in his breast.
For the rest,
Will had children and a wife,
More dear to him than life,
Whom he treasured in a cottage 'neath the hill ;
And not a man who dwelt
In all the place but felt
That he had a friend indeed,
To call on in his need,
When he gripped the sturdy hand of Smuggler Will.

Though 'tis true
That the coastguardsmen well knew
Almost every cave and storehouse round the coast,
Yet they never even guessed
How one cave of all the rest
Held the treasures that the smugglers valued most.
For, as now,
Beneath the brow
Of the mighty beetling crags
That frowned before the cave,
Keeping back the foaming wave,
Lay a line of jagged rocks,
Stretching out along the shore,
Guarding well and true the entrance from attack,
Evermore,
With a sullen deafning roar,
Every foe and every billow beating back.

Often on a darksome night,
When the pale moon's silv'ry rays
Clouded were and hid from sight,
Wanderers on the upper cliff
Plain might hear the sound of oar,
Muffled, as from out the shore
Darted forth a little skiff,
Gliding through a passage known
To the smugglers' eyes alone—
Passage narrow, hardly seen
E'en by eyes well tried and keen,
Yet the only way between
That cruel line of jagged reef,
Showing front so fierce and brave,
Guarding well the Smugglers' Cave.

One wild day, when blew the gale
Fiercely o'er the sullen sea with angry roar,
From the shore,
A little craft well armed, well manned,
With a tried and trusty band
'Neath the charge of Smuggler Will,

From the bay beneath the hill,
Ploughed its way through wind and wave,
Speeding toward the Smugglers' Cave.
Steadily bold Smuggler Will
Steered the boat with care and skill
Till the dangerous reef was passed,
Till the cave was reached at last.
Barely though their toil was o'er,
Scarcely had they reached the shore,
Ere they heard a gleesome shout,
And the coastguard boat sped out,
Dashing madly through each wave,
Steering only for the cave,
Heedless of the sunken reefs that stopped the way,
Knowing not that certain death
Lurked that foaming line beneath,
Wreathed himself in smiles amid the glittering spray.

Quick as thought brave Smuggler Will,
True to his best nature still,
Saw their peril—pondered not, nor calmly stood,
Saying they were come as foes,
But one thought alone arose,
He must save them from their danger if he could.
So he turned him to his band :
"Comrades, shall we idly stand—
See our neighbours dashed to pieces on the shore ?
Shall we dare to go back home,
Leaving them beneath the foam,
Haunted by their pallid faces evermore ?
Can we ever sink to sleep
While the sorrowing widows weep,
And the orphans beg their bread from door to door ?
Come then, comrades, let us start ;
If we man the boat and dart
Through the channel, even yet there may be time
To warn them 'gainst their fate ;
Haste then, lest it be too late—
Too late to save our hands from stain of crime !"

But a sullen murmur rose :
"What ! you will not help our foes ?
May God pardon you and lend me strength to-day !"
Then brave, true Smuggler Will,
Nothing fearing, dauntless still,
Through the angry boiling billows urged his way.

He had almost reached the boat,
When he sent forth such a shout
That it rang out o'er the ocean far and near—
"As you value life, keep back !
Stay your oars there, and keep back,
For the sake of those you love,
By the mighty God above,
Keep away from the reef, I say, keep clear !"

Well indeed the coastguard knew
Whate'er Will said must be true,
So were saved ;
Scarce though had their answering hail
Reached Will through the whistling gale.
Than a mighty billow rose,
Huge and chill,

Lifted him with angry dash,
 Bore him on with deaf'ning crash
 O'er the rocks that lay beneath,
 O'er the cruel jagged "Teeth,"
 Cold and lifeless then once more
 Tossed him on the cruel shore,
 Smuggler Will !

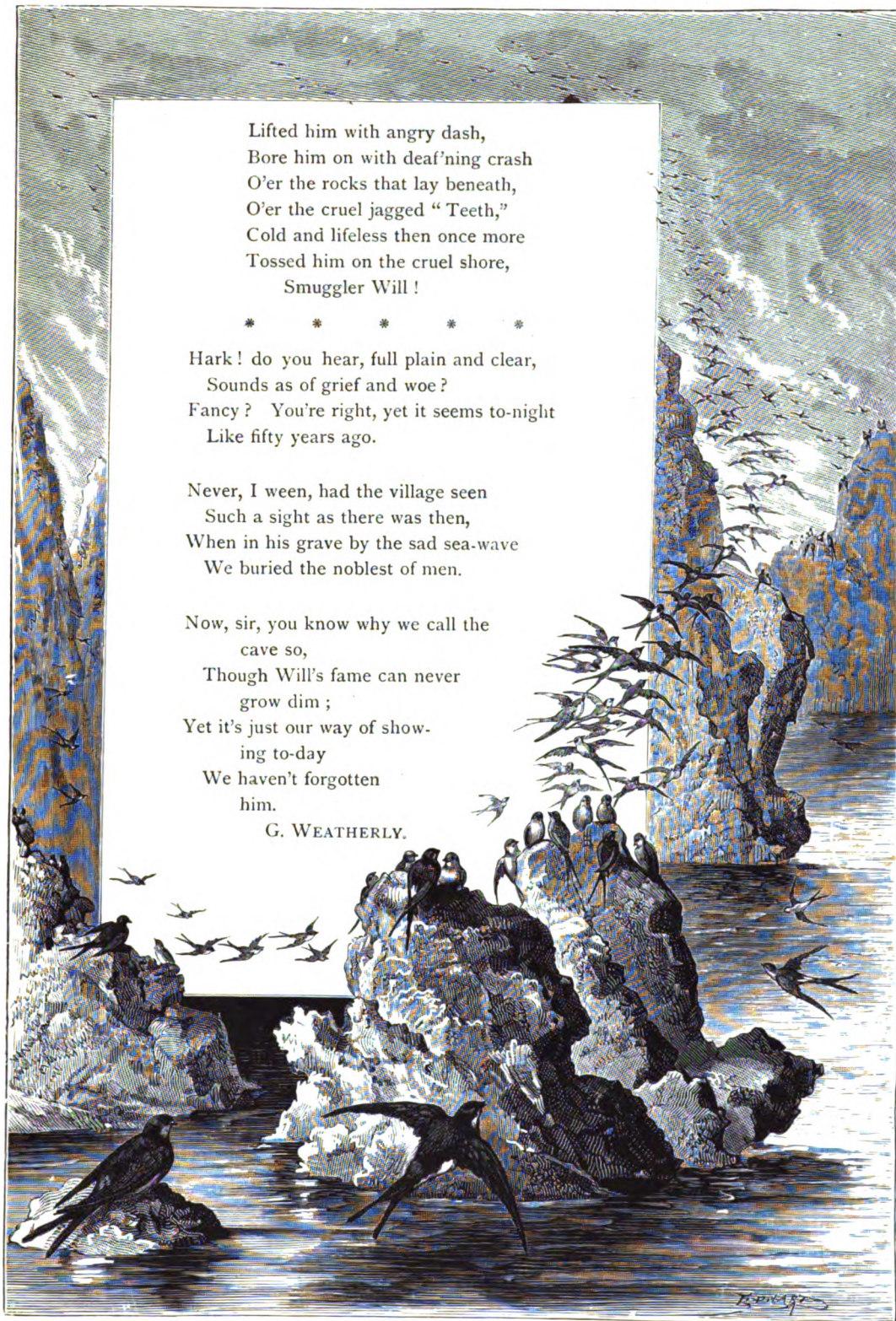
* * * * *

Hark ! do you hear, full plain and clear,
 Sounds as of grief and woe ?
 Fancy ? You're right, yet it seems to-night
 Like fifty years ago.

Never, I ween, had the village seen
 Such a sight as there was then,
 When in his grave by the sad sea-wave
 We buried the noblest of men.

Now, sir, you know why we call the
 cave so,
 Though Will's fame can never
 grow dim ;
 Yet it's just our way of show-
 ing to-day
 We haven't forgotten
 him.

G. WEATHERLY.







IN THE ORCHARD.

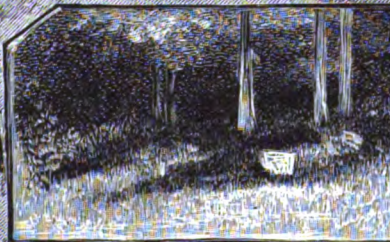
A TRIO OF TRIOLETS.



THE apples rosy-red !
 O the gnarled trunks grey and brown,
 Heavy branched overhead !
 O the apples rosy-red !
 O the merry laughter sped,
 As the fruit is showered down !
 O the apples rosy-red !
 O the gnarled trunks grey and brown !

O the blushes rosy-red !
 O the loving autumn breeze !
 O the words so softly said !
 O the blushes rosy-red !
 While old doubts and fears lie dead,
 Buried 'neath the apple-trees !
 O the blushes rosy-red !
 O the loving autumn breeze !

O the years so swiftly fled !
 O twin hearts that beat as one,
 With a love time-strengthened !
 O the years so swiftly fled !
 O the apples rosy-red
 That still ripen in the sun !
 O the years so swiftly fled !
 O twin hearts that beat as one !



AB



HARVEST SONG.

I.

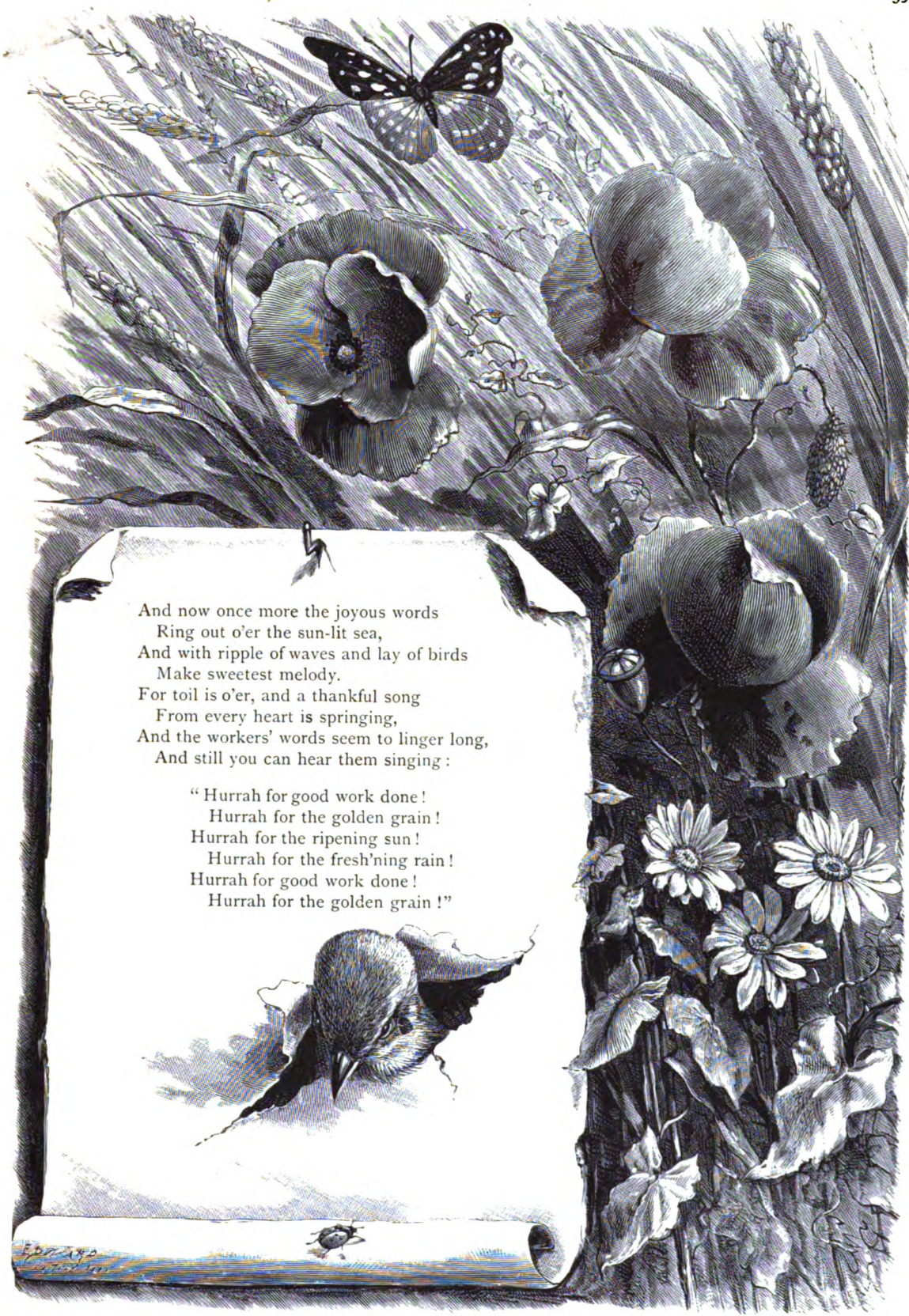
THE wind blows in at early morn
 Across the rippling sea,
 And dances along o'er the rustling corn,
 That welcomes it lovingly.
 Ah, summer breeze, caress while you may!
 Bees, linger with your humming!
 For the golden grain will be gathered to-day,
 The harvesters are coming!

E'en now you may hear their joyous shout
 Far down in the shady lane,
 Where the little brook winds in and out,
 And hides and peeps forth again.
 See now they are passing the lowing herds,
 And the pool where darts the swallow,
 And their song wafts up with the song of birds,
 Right down from the leafy hollow:

"Hurrah for the work begun!
 Hurrah for the golden grain!
 Hurrah for the ripening sun!
 Hurrah for the fresh'ning rain!
 Hurrah for the work begun!
 Hurrah for the golden grain!"

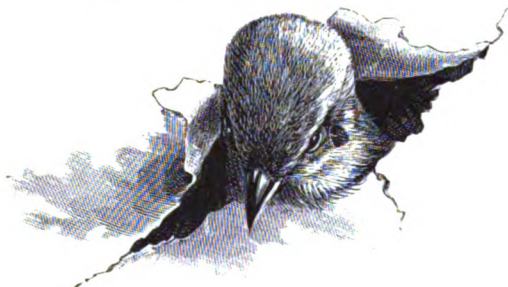
II.

The wind blows in at eve again,
 Across the shimmering sea,
 But seeks in vain for the rustling grain
 It had wooed so lovingly;
 For the corn is cut, and the golden sheaves
 Lie heaped in the cliff-side meadow,
 So it passes on to the nodding leaves,
 And dallies with them in the shadow.



And now once more the joyous words
Ring out o'er the sun-lit sea,
And with ripple of waves and lay of birds
Make sweetest melody.
For toil is o'er, and a thankful song
From every heart is springing,
And the workers' words seem to linger long,
And still you can hear them singing :

"Hurrah for good work done!
Hurrah for the golden grain!
Hurrah for the ripening sun!
Hurrah for the fresh'ning rain!
Hurrah for good work done!
Hurrah for the golden grain!"

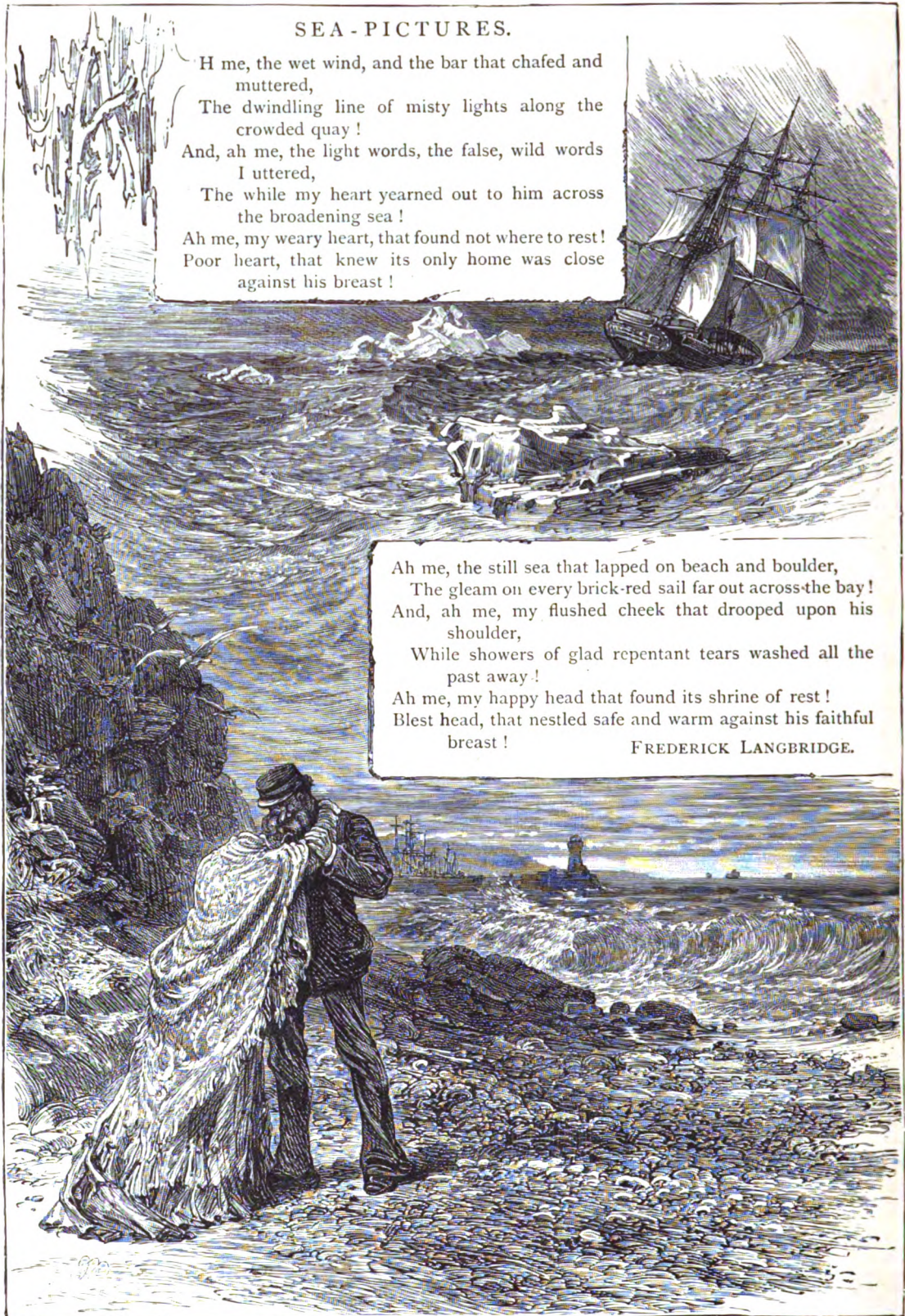


SEA - PICTURES.

H me, the wet wind, and the bar that chafed and
 muttered,
 The dwindling line of misty lights along the
 crowded quay !
 And, ah me, the light words, the false, wild words
 I uttered,
 The while my heart yearned out to him across
 the broadening sea !
 Ah me, my weary heart, that found not where to rest !
 Poor heart, that knew its only home was close
 against his breast !

Ah me, the still sea that lapped on beach and boulder,
 The gleam on every brick-red sail far out across the bay !
 And, ah me, my flushed cheek that drooped upon his
 shoulder,
 While showers of glad repentant tears washed all the
 past away !
 Ah me, my happy head that found its shrine of rest !
 Blest head, that nestled safe and warm against his faithful
 breast !

FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.



IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN!



IT might have been ! When life is young,
And hopes are bright, and hearts are strong
To battle with the heartless throng,
When youth and age are far between,
Who heeds the words so sadly sung ?—
It might have been !

It might have been ! When life is fair,
Youth stands beside the boundless sea
That ebbs and flows unceasingly,
And dreams of name and golden fame ;
And who shall limit the To-be
That's dawning there ?

It might have been ! When life is bright,
And love is in its golden prime,
Youth recks not of the coming night,
Nor dreams that there may be a time
When love will fail, or change, or die
Eternally !

It might have been ! When time grows grey,
And spring-tide's hopes have passed away,
Old age looks back on by-gone years—
Their many wants, and doubts, and fears—
And through the mist a way is seen :
The Might-have-been !

It might have been ! When age is sad,
Weary of waiting for the fame
That after all is but a name,
When life has lost the charm it had,
True knowledge makes regret more keen—
It might have been !

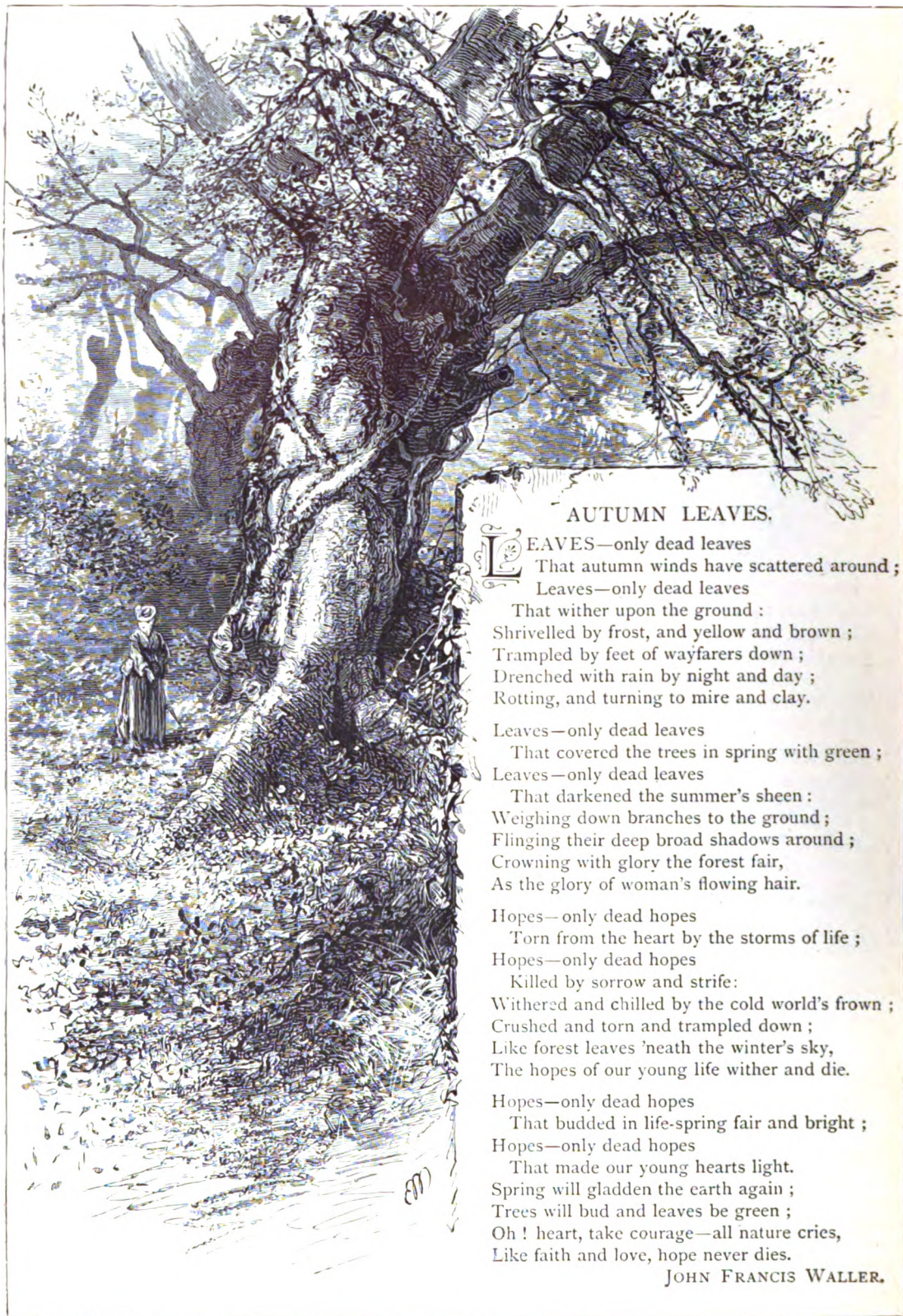
It might have been ! When youth is dead,
And love that was so false has fled,
When all the mockeries of the past
Have lost their tinsel rays at last,
The one true love is clearly seen,
That might have been !

It might have been ! Ah me ! ah me !
And who shall tell the misery
Of knowing all that life has lost ?
By thinking of the countless cost,
Poor comfort can the sad heart glean !
It might have been !

It might have been !—nay, rather rest,
Believing what has been was best !
The life whose sun has not yet set
Can find no room for vain regret,
And only folly crowns as queen
Its Might-have-been !

G. W.





AUTUMN LEAVES.

LEAVES—only dead leaves
That autumn winds have scattered around ;
Leaves—only dead leaves

That wither upon the ground :
Shrivelled by frost, and yellow and brown ;
Trampled by feet of wayfarers down ;
Drenched with rain by night and day ;
Rotting, and turning to mire and clay.

Leaves—only dead leaves
That covered the trees in spring with green ;
Leaves—only dead leaves

That darkened the summer's sheen :
Weighing down branches to the ground ;
Flinging their deep broad shadows around ;
Crowning with glory the forest fair,
As the glory of woman's flowing hair.

Hopes—only dead hopes
Torn from the heart by the storms of life ;
Hopes—only dead hopes

Killed by sorrow and strife:
Withered and chilled by the cold world's frown ;
Crushed and torn and trampled down ;
Like forest leaves 'neath the winter's sky,
The hopes of our young life wither and die.

Hopes—only dead hopes
That budded in life-spring fair and bright ;
Hopes—only dead hopes

That made our young hearts light.
Spring will gladden the earth again ;
Trees will bud and leaves be green ;
Oh ! heart, take courage—all nature cries,
Like faith and love, hope never dies.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.

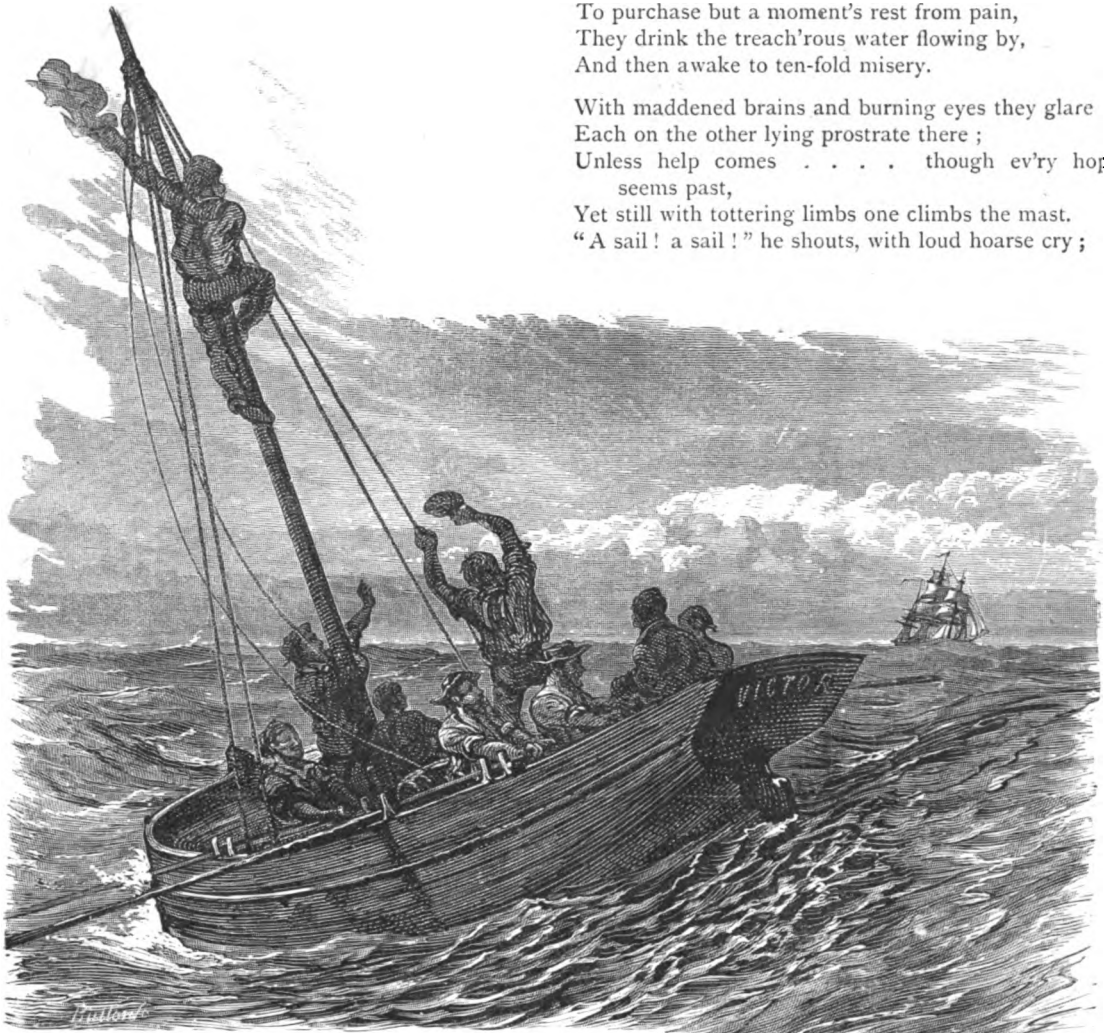
IN PERIL.

WAVE-TOSSED upon the ocean—far and nigh | Morn follows morn, and thirst and hunger vie,
 Huge storm-clouds scud across the troubled sky; | Each fiercely striving for the mastery;

Dire anguish saps all reason in the brain;
 To purchase but a moment's rest from pain,
 They drink the treach'rous water flowing by,
 And then awake to ten-fold misery.

With maddened brains and burning eyes they glare
 Each on the other lying prostrate there;
 Unless help comes though ev'ry hope
 seems past,

Yet still with tottering limbs one climbs the mast.
 "A sail! a sail!" he shouts, with loud hoarse cry;



Foam-crested billows gleam and glisten white,
 Lit by the angry tempest's lurid light—
 Beaten and buffeted, through darkness borne,
 With straining eyes they watch and wait for morn.

Morn comes, and slow the sun-god, as from sleep,
 Uprears his tawny crest from out the deep,
 Mounts high into the heaven with angry gaze,
 And darts o'er all the sea his fiercest rays—
 Athirst, throats parched and dry, they watch and
 pray

That dark'ning night may drive away the day.

Then, faint through knowledge of sure safety nigh,
 The weakened senses fail in ecstasy.



THE WOODS IN AUTUMN

A SONNET.

FLASHES of gold that fleck the sober grey ;
 Dark ruddy tints that crimson in the light ;
 Soft streaks of silver glimmering pearly white,
 Amid the russet browns half hid away ;
 Pure green of spring that lingers while it may ;
 Patches of ivy-foliage dark as night ;
 Rich purple shades that peep out from the height :

Such crown with glory the September day.
 Oh, autumn woods ! I lie beside the stream
 That winds you round about so lovingly,
 And rapt in sense of wondrous beauty, see
 How vain must be ambition's lofty dream
 To rival tints like yours, or dare to trace
 Your perfect harmony, your perfect grace.

G. WEATHERLY.



DONALD'S ADIEU.

I STOOD with Donald on the deck,
 Till rang the warning bell ;
 Said he, " My maid, the anchor's weigh'd,
 And we must bid farewell.
 When I am far across the sea,
 Remember this, my dear,
 Swift o'er the main I'll come again,
 And that within a year."

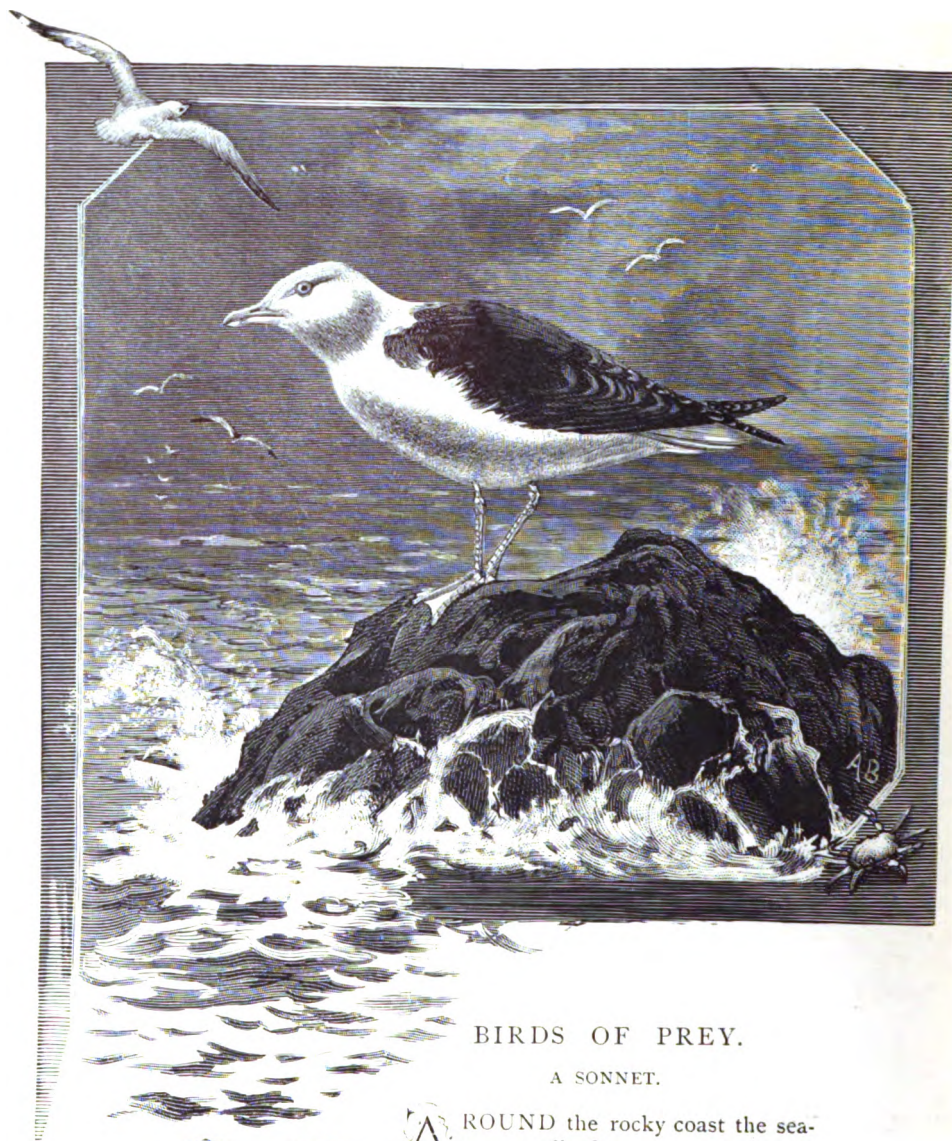
He gave to me a parting kiss—
 'Tis one I treasure still ;
 For o'er the sea he'll come to me—
 He said so, and he will !

They tell me I am foolish now
 To wait upon the shore,
 For he again across the main
 Is coming nevermore ;
 They say his ship has sunk beneath
 The wave, and he is dead ;
 But still I know 'tis false, for O
 I keep the words he said !

He gave to me a parting kiss—
 'Tis one I treasure still ;
 For o'er the sea he'll come to me—
 He said so, and he will !

EDWARD OXENFORD.





BIRDS OF PREY.

A SONNET.

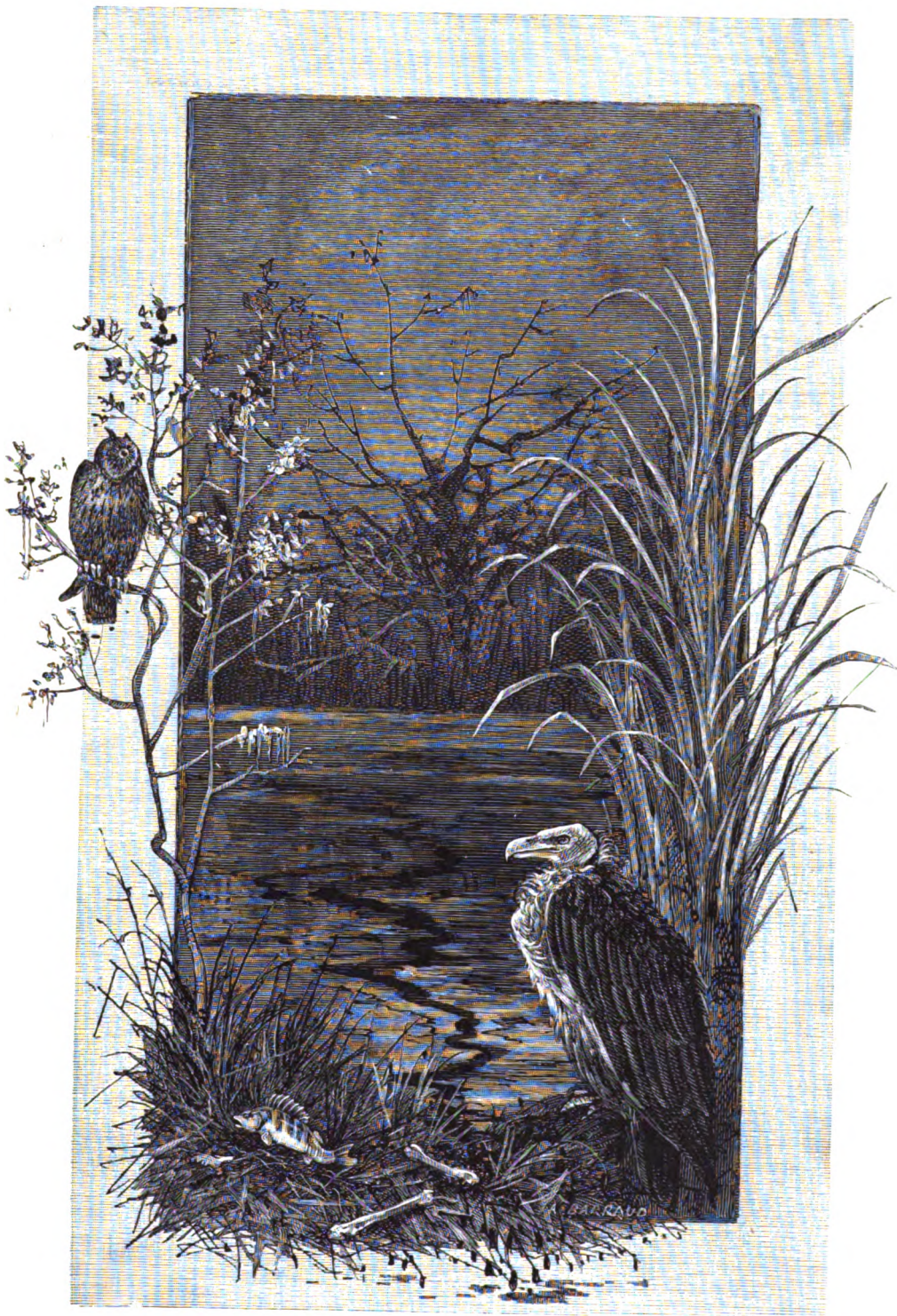


ROUND the rocky coast the sea-
gulls fly,
And dart upon their victims in
the deep;

Round marsh and mere the owls and vultures keep
Their anxious watch; and, from his home on high,
The eagle swoops like lightning from the sky,
And bears earth's sweetest songsters to his nest:
So prey the birds with eager, pitiless zest,
And harvest wheresoever they may reap.

And we, too have rapacious birds of prey,
Who flaunt their cruelties in our midst, and show
No pity for the weak—or friend or foe;
Who've parted from sweet mercy many a day,
Yet dare not, cannot, echo the birds' cry
That they must prey upon their kind or die.

G. W.





OUR LILY OF LOVE.



UR babe? Alas! she is no longer ours;
 God sent His silent gardener one day
 To cull a posy of earth's rarest flowers;
 Moving at leisure 'mong love's brightest bowers,
 He paused to pluck our lily from her spray.

The tender petals closed around the fair,
 Sweet heart, all innocence and purity;
 We saw our blossom droop, and pleaded, "Spare!"
 A soft voice, floating earthward through the air,
 Breathed, "Be resigned; it is the Lord's decree."

Mutely we knelt beside our flow'ret's bed,
 Hand-linked in tearful trouble, half inclined
 To murmur at the mandate that hath sped
 With lightning swiftness through our hearts, and spread
 Death's dearth o'er all. Anon we grew resigned:

Resigned, because we knew she was not lost;
 Resigned, because we knew our bud of love
 (When the dark boundary of death was crossed,
 And God had wiped away the clinging frost)
 Would bloom for aye in heaven's bowers above.

Here is a ringlet of our darling's hair,
 Soft as the softest silk, and golden bright
 As sunshine shimmering through summer air;
 And here a likeness of our flow'ret fair
 Who blossoms now in realms that know no night.

The days seem dull, however bright the sun,
 And we are mournful now who erst were gay;
 But we will hope until our lives are done,
 That we in heaven may see our little one
 Blossoming on a pure celestial spray.



BY misty glen and babbling rill,
 In solemn chant that ceaseth never,
 The lonely voices of the hill
 The solitudes with music fill,
 That swells and falls and swells for ever.

To-day the same as yesterday,
 Where woodlands gloom and waters glisten ;
 To-night as weird and sweet the lay
 As heard a thousand years away,
 The silent hills alone to listen.

Low when the winds are still they sing,
 By sunlit brooks the mountains under ;
 By starry lake and glimmering spring,
 When moonlit peaks fantastic fling
 Their shadows in a land of wonder.

Loud when the winds are loud they rise
 From rocky woods and gusty hollows,
 From craggy deeps where darkness lies,
 Along the moorlands to the skies,
 Wild chorus echoing chorus follows.

Song of a lone world far away,
 Where mist-enfolded mystery slumbers,
 Night unto night and day to day,
 While nations rise and thrones decay,
 The ages hear thy solemn numbers.

Man's little din of work and war,
 Man's fury and tumultuous fever,
 Die on the bounding slopes afar
 In silent air, and never mar
 The song that heavenward goes for ever.

J. HUIE.



I.—THE FADING YEAR.

CLOSE by the garden walk, the marigold
Uplifted to the sun with modest pride
Its shield of many an amber plaited fold,
And hollyhocks flamed out all crimson dyed,
And glowing asters rainbow hues unrolled,
That with the amethyst-tinted heavens vied :
Whilst all around the air was sweet beset
With perfume of the fading mignonette.

Crisp were the leaves that fell in golden showers,
And glimmered 'neath the lessening harvest moon,
That o'er the ruby-red-gemmed autumn bowers
Sailed misty on rose-clouded afternoon :
And the bowed heads of worshipping sunflowers
Reminded that the sun was lost too soon ;
And through the garden fled a gentle sigh,
As though sad Clytie's spirit wandered by.

The birds had taken wing to distant lands,
The bulrushes turned yellow 'mongst the sedges ;
The trailing leaves fell off from willow bands,
And haws began to ripen on the hedges ;
The Indian creeper wove, in brilliant strands
Of red and gold, rare fringe along roof-ledges,
And purple berries on the elder-trees
Felt ghosts of summer kisses in the breeze.

A gleam of beauty struggled to set free
The earth from desolation. But the voice
Hath sounded forth from Orcus Jove's decree,
And Erebus' hoarse waters roar, " Rejoice !"
And mournful Ceres lifts her veil to see
The consort of the gloomy monarch's choice
Shroud her fair head in autumn's paling bloom,
And sink reluctant to her regal tomb.

Whilst all the gleaming flowers fast fade away,
And winter folds them in a dreamful sleep,
Wherein in loyal loving fancy they
Anigh the portals of her prison creep,
That haply through each dear unsunlit day
They over her a tender watch may keep,
Ready to start at the first touch of Spring,
Beneath her feet their earliest buds to fling.



ALL HALLOW EVE.



III.—LESBIA.

BUT little Lesbia, fanciful and wild,
Determines yet to try another rite ;
Her nuts have burned, and fate on her hath smiled :
Her parings took the shape she hoped they might :
And now her prying spirit is beguiled
Into the mirror, on this wondrous night,
To peep, and there young Florian's face to see—
Ah ! if she should, how happy she would be.

And unperceived she quits the throng below,
And eager mounts the antique walnut stair ;
Then slips, with step full stealthy and full slow,
Through the dim-lighted portrait gallery, where
The faces of some centuries ago
Look down upon a youthful face as fair
As any beauty's of the house that bore
The palm of belle in misty days of yore.

Scared at her shadow, shrinking as the wind
Through tree-tops wails its melancholy song,
Or shakes the casement. More than half inclined
Is she to turn ; for terrors that belong
To aught of magic ne'er had crossed her mind.
Yet although trembling, in her love-mood strong
She onward goes, nor e'er behind looks she ;
For if she looked, the spell would broken be.

On—till at last is reached the room of state,
Where once a princess slept in bygone years ;
Where lingers yet the legend of the great,
And faded splendour duskily appears ;
A fitting place wherein to try her fate,
Though the strange quiet scarce allays her fears.
She opens the door, with eyes bent on the ground ;
Her heart beats louder than all other sound.

II.—BURNING THE NUTS.

WITHIN the house the hearth-fire's crackling blaze
Lights up with ruddy glare the ancient room,
And chisels fresh with its quick-darting rays
The oaken flowers that on the panels bloom :
Then flickers o'er a troop of earth-born fays
Around it met, to learn to-night their doom,
Through russet nuts, that on All Hallow Eve
Show anxious lovers whom they may believe.

The fire burns low, the nuts are named, and nigh
The glowing embers laid in solemn state,
And May and Cis and Mab and Rose stand by
With bright flushed faces, and expectant wait
To see if this nut from that other fly,
Or if close bound by love they duly mate,
And burn together in a love-flame bright,
Enkindled by the magic of the night :

With merry laughter, yet with beating heart,
For half they mock at, half believe the spell,
Nor care to see those two nuts turn apart—
And yet if they should burn together well,
Forthwith, though inly pleased, a doubt they start,
" As if such idle charms truth e'er could tell !"
Then apple-parings o'er their shoulders throw,
To see if the loved letter's formed or no.



IV.—THE MIRROR.

The moonbeams fitful fell athwart the space,
 In many a slender line of silver light,
 And turned to ivory sweet Lesbia's face;
 While through the rich stained window, colours
 bright
 Upon the polished floor gay patterns trace,
 And purple border Lesbia's robe of white:
 Whilst blazoned heart upon the centre pane
 Throws on her heaving breast a blood-red stain.

She stands the massive mirror now before,
 Where many a stately lady in her prime
 Hath conned her toasted beauty o'er and o'er,
 As yet unsullied by the hand of Time:
 Yet dares she not her eyes from off the floor
 To raise, whilst distant church-clock's steady
 chime
 Tolls out the hour: lithe Lesbia, still afraid,
 Stands there a trembling, hoping, love-lorn maid.

Her hand is raised to free her coils of hair,
 And in a moment like a golden veil
 It ripples round her. Like a statue fair,
 With downcast eyes, and parted lips, and pale,
 She takes the comb with pearl inlaid rare,
 To comb her tresses ere her courage fail:
 The while a rosy apple, trembling, she
 Eats as Eve ate of the forbidden tree;

Half wishing she were back within the hall,
 With gay companions by the fire's bright blaze:
 For the dim silver silence doth appal:
 And timid she at last her eyes doth raise—
 But scarce upon the mirror lets them fall,
 Than back she starts affrighted, for her gaze
 Hath met the answering gaze of Florian there,
 Enchanted with the gold-veiled statue fair.

She shivers—paler yet her white face grows,
 Though she hath seen what most she wished to
 see;
 Another glance upon the glass she throws,
 And hopes, and fears, she may mistaken be.
 But still his face the polished mirror shows;
 And with a startled cry she turns to flee,
 When, lo! a voice that chains her to the spot—
 "'Tis thine own Florian, Lesbia, fear me not."



V.—FLORIAN.

His arm is round her. "'Tis thy Florian, sweet;
 Ah! pardon me that I have made thee start;
 I am no ghost; I tracked thy dainty feet,
 This Hallow Eve, to play a spirit's part,
 That in the mirror eyes with eyes might meet,
 And thou through them shouldst learn my faithful
 heart.

O love! thrice blest be each mysterious rite
 That led us hither our love-vows to plight."

No marble statue now; the crimson blood
 Straight from her heart upmantled in her face,
 Then coursing through her veins in sudden flood
 Of joy, gave to her yet another grace;
 And Florian bending, as she blushing stood,
 In her dark eyes his happiness to trace,
 Bent lower, and in love's first rapturous kiss
 Felt past and future blend in present bliss.

So stood they in the moonlight—and behold,
 Rose up a garden, where on every stem
 Bloomed silver lilies; and transparent rolled
 A crystal river, and full many a gem
 Sparkled upon its shores 'mongst sands of gold;
 And round about their brows a diadem
 Fell in bright rainbow glory from above,
 Whilst a sweet unseen chorus sang of love.

The moon sailed by—the stars did brighter shine;
 The flower's half woke, through dreaming that the
 sun
 Had risen—and the river's crystal line
 Rippled as though some passing breeze had won
 It into smiling—whispering, "Life divine
 Hath once again upon the earth begun;
 For Love with fairy hand a web doth weave,
 From magic threads spun on All Hallow Eve."

JULIA GODDARD.

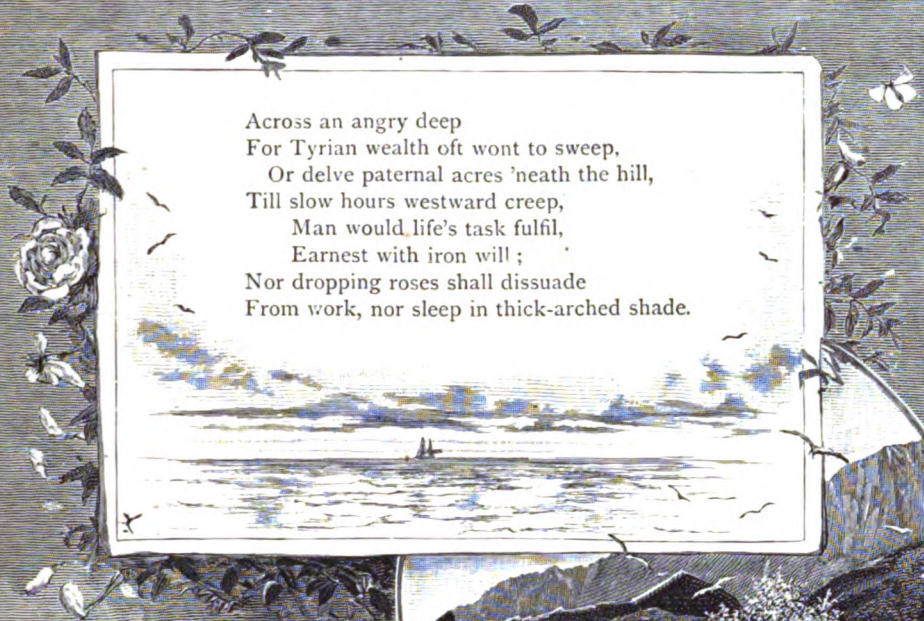


A SONG OF THE SEASONS

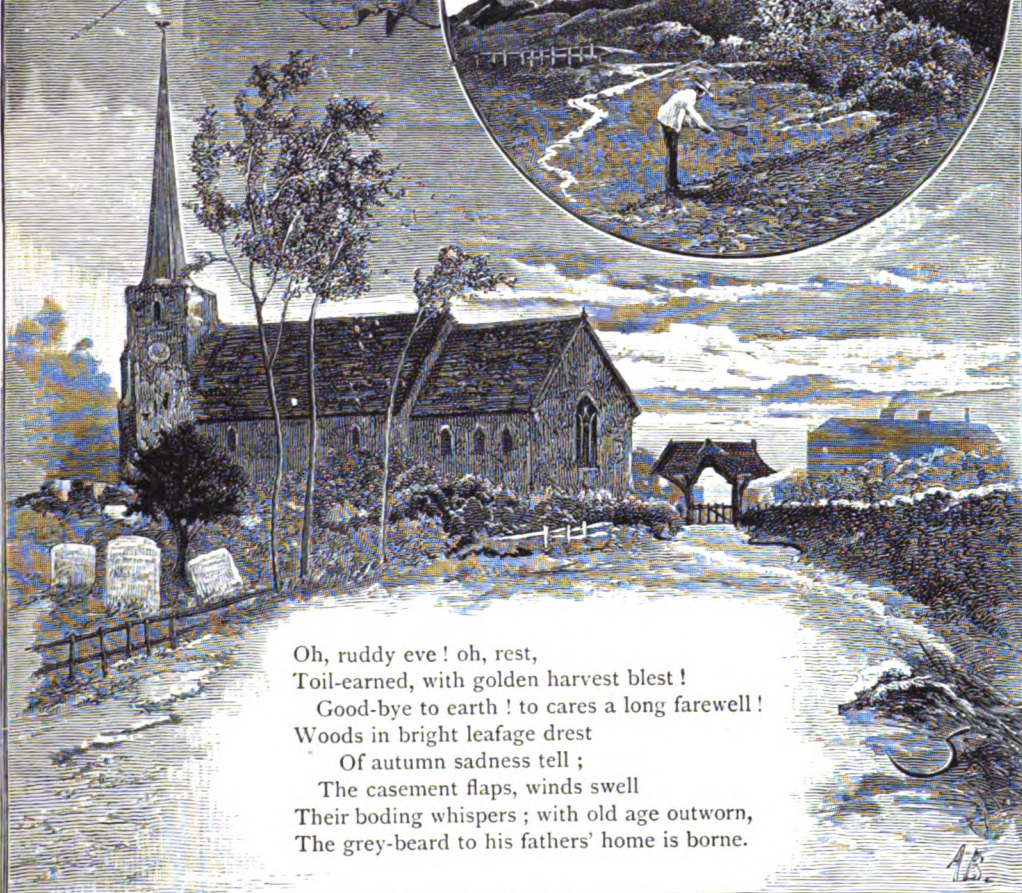
BY THE REV. M. G. WATKINS, M.A.

IN winter's bands he lies,
 With lacework round his beauteous eyes ;
 Forbear the snow-heaped coverlid to shake !
 Will the sweet infant rise ?
 Can life and vigour wake
 In bird and jewelled brake ?
 With bluer skies, large suns, he'll thrive,
 Our joyous babe eftsoons will live !

Your pallor, snowdrops, raise ;
 Adown warm borders, crocus, blaze ;
 Thy gleeful songs, thrush, quicken overhead ;
 Beside the primrose ways
 The happy lovers tread,
 While purple spring-buds shed
 On Love's young dream their fragrant bliss,
 And trust doth sanctify each kiss.



Across an angry deep
 For Tyrian wealth oft wont to sweep,
 Or delve paternal acres 'neath the hill,
 Till slow hours westward creep,
 Man would, life's task fulfil,
 Earnest with iron will ;
 Nor dropping roses shall dissuade
 From work, nor sleep in thick-arched shade.

Oh, ruddy eve ! oh, rest,
 Toil-earned, with golden harvest blest !
 Good-bye to earth ! to cares a long farewell !
 Woods in bright leafage drest
 Of autumn sadness tell ;
 The casement flaps, winds swell
 Their boding whispers ; with old age outworn,
 The grey-beard to his fathers' home is borne.



AUTUMN'S LAST SMILE.

AH! linger, golden Autumn; good things come
 The latest to us—patience, wisdom, love.
 The ricks are heaped up round the deep-
 thatched home,
 And yet thy footsteps farther westward rove.
 Why wilt thou hasten from our happy land?
 Why tread those barren leagues of plunging sea?
 We miss thee where the crimsoned chestnuts stand;
 Our fond eyes fail with searching wood and lea.

And yet thy presence haunts me. Soft, sad smiles,
 And floating hair that glads the wandering breeze;
 The nut-hung copse thy restless flight beguiles;
 I follow—thou hast gained the darkling trees.

O'er gleaming stubbles, where the distant blue
 Fades into tender skies, thy form I chase.
 Thou dost but mock; the further I pursue,
 More seldom glimpses catch I of thy face.

Methought I held thee in that Devon "combe"
 Where swinging fruitage soothed the babbling stream;
 I caught thy flutt'ring robes; thy breath's perfume
 Smote my warm cheek—thou fleetest like a dream.

Or do I view thee 'mid the Cumnor hills.
 Where Isis glitters in her flow'r-strewn bed?
 Oxford with sun-lit towers my fancy thrills;
 I linger, turn—and once more thou hast fled!

Undaunted, on to Yarrow's moors I fare;
 Long swells of pink-flushed heather hem me
 round;
 The great grey mountains stand in silence there;
 Thou wilt not in those solitudes be found.

Again I seek my garden. Thou hast left
 Tokens by which thy gracious moods I know:
 Thine azure bells, of half their charms bereft—
 Thy scarlet-berried wreath—thy poppy's glow.

O'erhead, where thou hast passed, I see the lime
 In gold and russet tricked, that it may grace
 Thy progress from our sorrowing land, what time
 Eve's mellow mists, pale stars have dimmed thy face.

Soon—but too soon—will winter strip thy bowers,
 Smother with snow the fields, thy loved domain.
 Grudge not thy smiles to brighten these last hours;
 If thou must leave, propitious close thy reign.

Ah! linger, gorgeous queen; I'll gladly twine
 Chaplets of song—will deck thy raven hair—
 Will wreath thy wheat-spears with the clinging vine,
 And honour thee with all that's sweet and fair.

Vain vows! I wistful see thy parting gaze
 Athwart the glade which erstwhile held thy throne;
 Thou flingest me one smile from olden days—
 One last fond look—next moment thou art gone!

FALLING LEAVES.

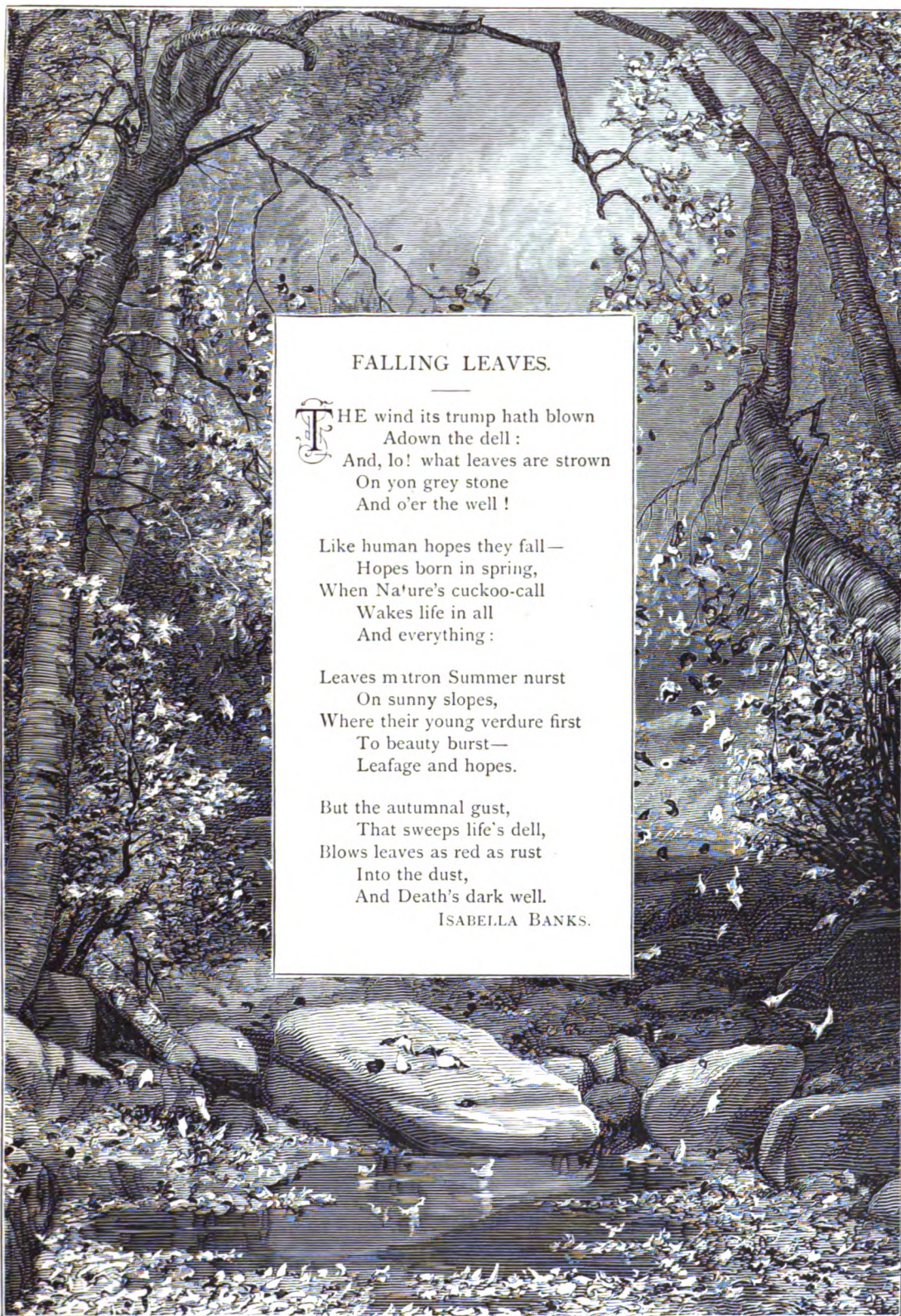
THE wind its trump hath blown
Adown the dell :
And, lo ! what leaves are strown
On yon grey stone
And o'er the well !

Like human hopes they fall—
Hopes born in spring,
When Nature's cuckoo-call
Wakes life in all
And everything :

Leaves matron Summer nurst
On sunny slopes,
Where their young verdure first
To beauty burst—
Leafage and hopes.

But the autumnal gust,
That sweeps life's dell,
Blows leaves as red as rust
Into the dust,
And Death's dark well.

ISABELLA BANKS.





AFTER SUNSET.

AFTER sunset in the west,
 Robes that clad the monarch Day,
 Golden crown and crimson vest,
 All are spurned and cast away.
 Far along the purple sea
 Fading splendours slowly die ;
 Many a bird to many a tree
 Rustling flies, for night is nigh.

After sunset, gone the glow,
 All the air with silence fills ;
 After sunset, colder blow
 Wailing winds from lonely hills.
 Ceased is labour, hushed is mirth,
 Day has died on couch of gold ;
 Twilight veils the weary earth,
 Quiet broods o'er flock and fold.

After sunset, o'er the moor
 Slowly flies the plover home ;
 To the leafy cottage door,
 Sleepy-eyed, the children come ;
 Watching how the great white moon
 Rises high o'er hill and plain ;
 Silvery stars will sparkle soon,
 Peeping out and in again.

After sunset, melodies
 All unheard in noisy day,
 Like a fragrant southern breeze
 Through the pensive spirit stray.
 Mem'ries, lost, ah me ! so long,
 Floating round me dreamily,
 Like a dim-remembered song,
 Melt into a thought of thee !

AUTUMN.

THE light fades darkly in the western sky,
 And overhead
 The clouds, that wore a ruddy tinge of red,
 Are passing by
 Into a violet bed.

The leaves begin to fall upon the grass,
 And, almost bare,
 The poplar waves her long arms in the air,
 And, as they pass,
 The starlings gather there.

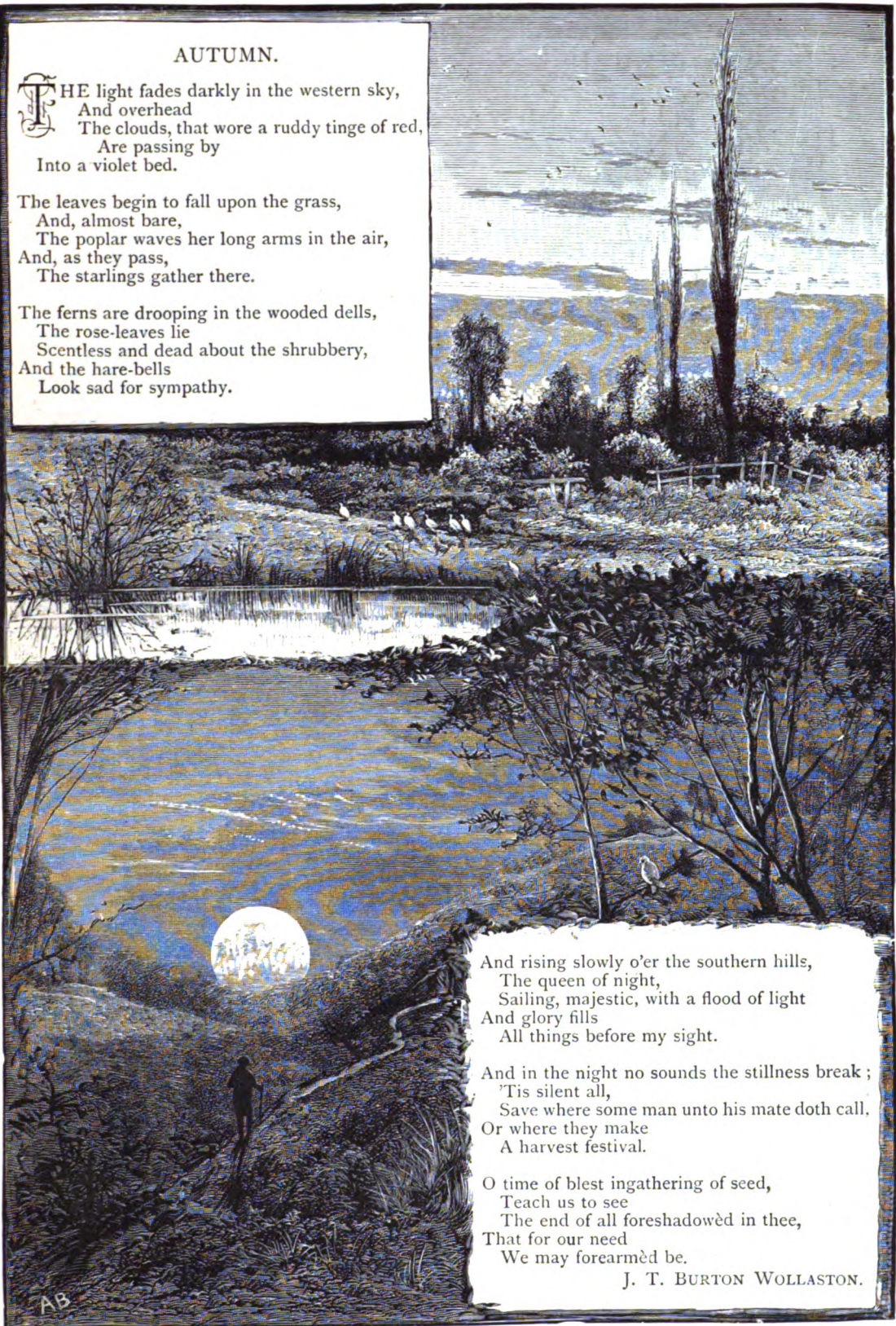
The ferns are drooping in the wooded dells,
 The rose-leaves lie
 Scentless and dead about the shrubbery,
 And the hare-bells
 Look sad for sympathy.

And rising slowly o'er the southern hills,
 The queen of night,
 Sailing, majestic, with a flood of light
 And glory fills
 All things before my sight.

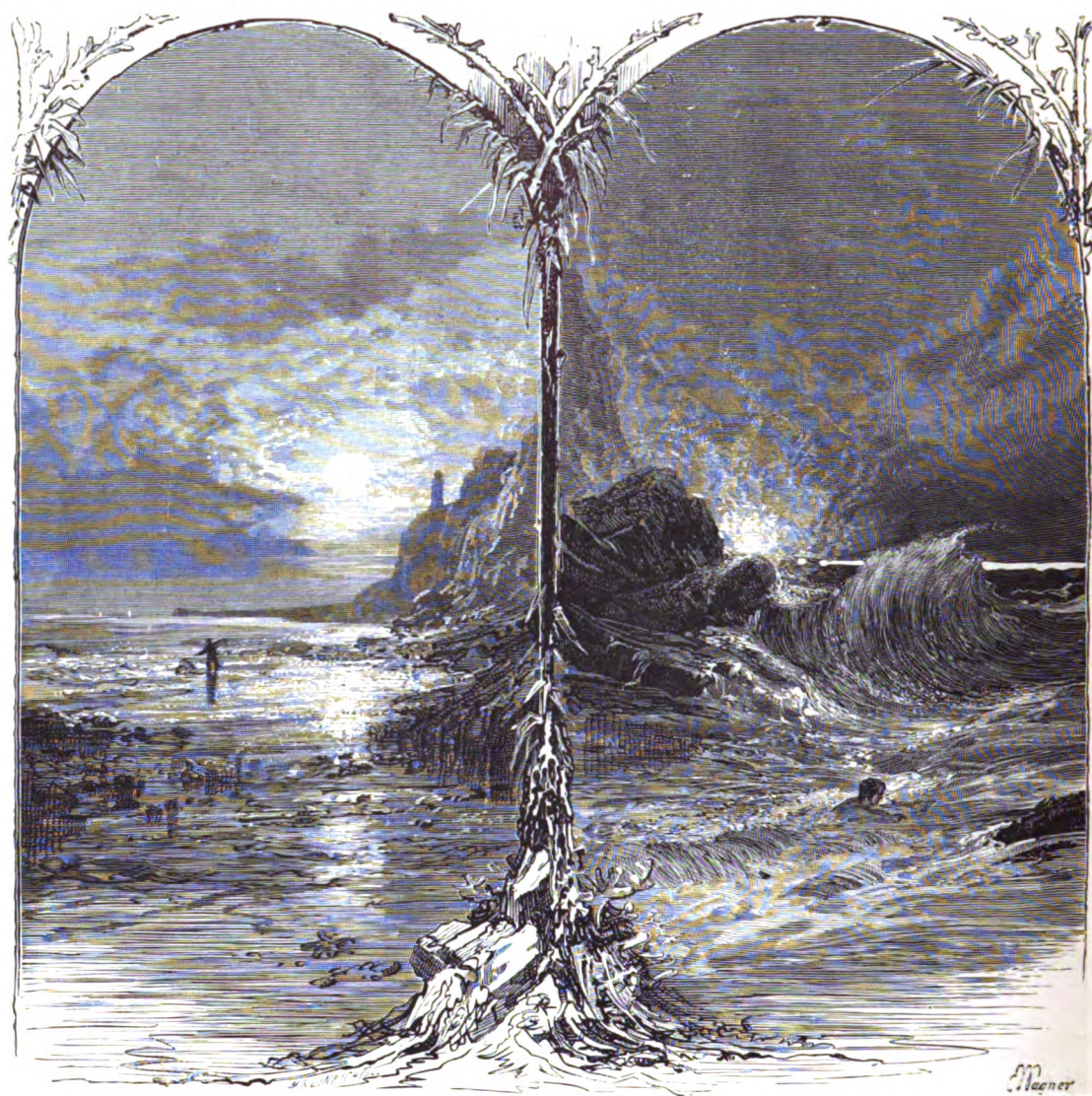
And in the night no sounds the stillness break ;
 'Tis silent all,
 Save where some man unto his mate doth call,
 Or where they make
 A harvest festival.

O time of blest ingathering of seed,
 Teach us to see
 The end of all foreshadowèd in thee,
 That for our need
 We may forearmèd be.

J. T. BURTON WOLLASTON.



AB



SEA-WAVES: A CONTRAST.

THE dawn of day—
 And the glad sea-waves
 Come sweeping in o'er the golden sands,
 With the playful touch of loving hands,
 And lightly sport and eddy round
 The little pebbles on the shore,
 With softly wooing murmuring sound,
 And laugh and dance with sunny glee,
 And scatter far their frothy spray,
 And gambol in right merrily:
 So brightly dawns the summer day,
 So merrily!

The dusk of eve—
 And the sad sea-waves
 Come rushing in o'er the rocky shore,
 With hoarsely muttered sullen roar;
 Then dash along with frenzied speed,
 And toss their foamy manes aloft,
 From Ocean's curbing bridle freed;
 While far and wide o'er the surging sea
 The heavens are black with cloudy night,
 And the wailing wind sighs mournfully:
 Thus ends the day that dawned so bright!
 Ah, miserie! G. W.



WRECKED!

TOSSED aloft on mighty billows, borne along in cruel glee,
Speeds a good ship to destruction, o'er the tempest-riven sea.

Hoary-crested, white with splendour, mounting high with frenzied dash,
Round the coast the waves are gleaming, lit up by the lightning flash.

On towards the roaring breakers, through the surf and through the foam,
Speeds the good ship to destruction, speeds the good ship to her home.

In amongst the cruel breakers, wrestled for with sinewy strength—
Then a few poor spars and timbers, to:sed upon the shore at length ;

Tossed upon the shore to linger, crushed and useless, many a day,
Till another mighty tempest, pitying, bears the wreck away.

So full often have I noticed men by nature bold and brave,
Tossed aloft 'mid Sorrow's tempest, buffeted by wind and wave ;

Drifted in among the breakers, lifted high with angry roar ;
Bruised and crushed, the spirit broken, cast a wreck upon the shore,

There to lie in shame and anguish, raising not the head again,
Till in mercy comes Death's billow, hiding them and all their pair.

A Harvest Idyll.

I.—GOLDEN HARVEST DAYS.

O THE early autumn breezes !
 Soft wild gusts of music making,
 Lazily the gold leaves shaking
 To the ground ;
 Summer days the earth forsaking
 Spread a golden flush around—
 From the amber-lighted skies
 To the sun-stained violet dyes
 Of the Indian summer mist,
 Like to golden amethyst,
 Or to shattered chrysolite ;
 Or amid the deepening folds
 Of the velvet marigolds,
 Or nasturtiums shining bright ;
 Or orchard with the bending weight
 Of golden plums or apples red,
 Or damsons with their purple freight
 Beside the river-bed ;
 Or golden spears of waving corn
 That ripe for harvest stand ;
 Whilst the moon looks down with golden horn
 All over the golden land—
 Above, below, one golden glow
 Around the earth a lying ;
 Whilst fragrant gales breathe soft and low
 Sweet dirge for the summer dying.



R. & TAYLOR

II.—"TO-MORROW."

THE farmer stands in the sunset glow,
 And he feels a joyous thrill,
 As his eye wanders over the valley below,
 Or rests on the crowning hill.
 "To-morrow, to-morrow," says he, "my men
 Shall go to work with a will."

His daughter stands in the beechen shade,
 Where the bubbling brook purls by ;
 Now wherefore should sorrow to such fair maid
 Come ever anigh, anigh ?
 "To-morrow, to-morrow, *he* goes away,"
 Says she, with a gentle sigh.

A youth strolls musing along the lane,
 In the glittering evenshine.
 "Ah, what would I care for worldly gain
 If the farmer's daughter were mine ?
 But with to-morrow there comes farewell,
 And an end to my dream divine."

A little bird listens upon a bough,
 And a blithesome song chirps he—
 "Reaping, and speaking, and lover's vow
 May all of them come to be ;
 To-morrow ! who knows what to-morrow will
 bring ?"

Yet heard him none of the three.

III.—IN THE CORNFIELD.

MERRILY the reapers reap ;
 Falls the corn in yellow billows,
 Falls the corn in yellow heap ;
 Shyly doth a maiden creep
 To the bending willows.

Zephyr playing here and there
 Sets the shadows dancing ;
 Quivers soft the golden air,
 Whilst the maiden everywhere
 For the youth is glancing.

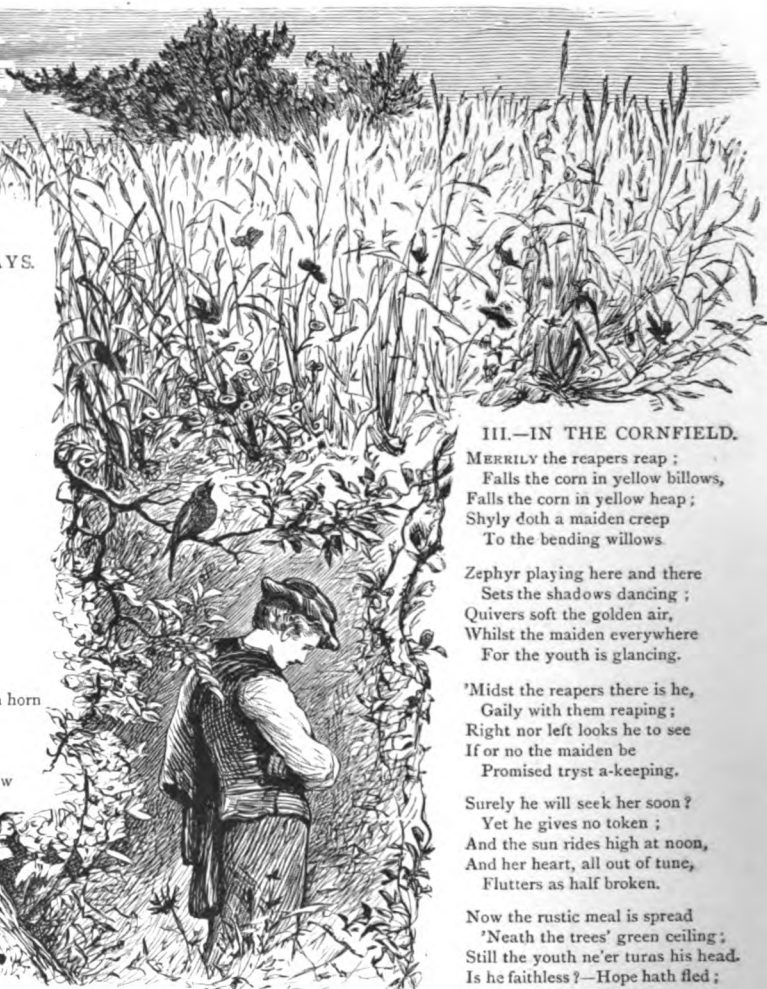
'Midst the reapers there is he,
 Gaily with them reaping ;
 Right nor left looks he to see
 If or no the maiden be
 Promised tryst a-keeping.

Surely he will seek her soon ?
 Yet he gives no token ;
 And the sun rides high at noon,
 And her heart, all out of tune,
 Flutters as half broken.

Now the rustic meal is spread
 'Neath the trees' green ceiling ;
 Still the youth ne'er turas his head.
 Is he faithless ?—Hope hath fled ;
 And, her grief concealing,

Quick the gentle maid doth flee
 To the purling river.
 "Is this his farewell to be ?
 Hath he, then, no word for me ?
 Hath joy gone for ever ?"

And the hours go slowly by
 Whilst the maiden lies aweary ;
 Sunshine all around doth lie ;
 Cloudless is the summer sky,
 But for her the world is dreary.



IV.—CUTTING THE "MAIDEN" SHEAF.

A shout goes up throughout the field,
 "Well hath the stranger done!
 Good luck to him; the "maiden" sheaf
 His toil hath fairly won.
 For the last spikes of standing corn
 His sickle hath cut down;
 And round him stand the reaper band,
 With praise his work to crown.

All carefully a ribbon blue
 He draweth from his vest.
 Now who may be the maiden fair
 That pleases him the best,
 To whom he'll give the "maiden" sheaf
 That is so fairly dressed?
 Say who will be the queen to-night
 Of harvest revels gay?
 And is she dark, or is she fair?
 And has she gold or raven hair?
 Can other maids with her compare?
 Who is the maiden, say?



VI.—REAPERS' SONG.

With pipe and drum
 We come, we come;
 The reaping is over, the maiden won.
 The song we raise
 In grateful praise
 For the gentle showers and the golden sun
 That brought us the golden corn.

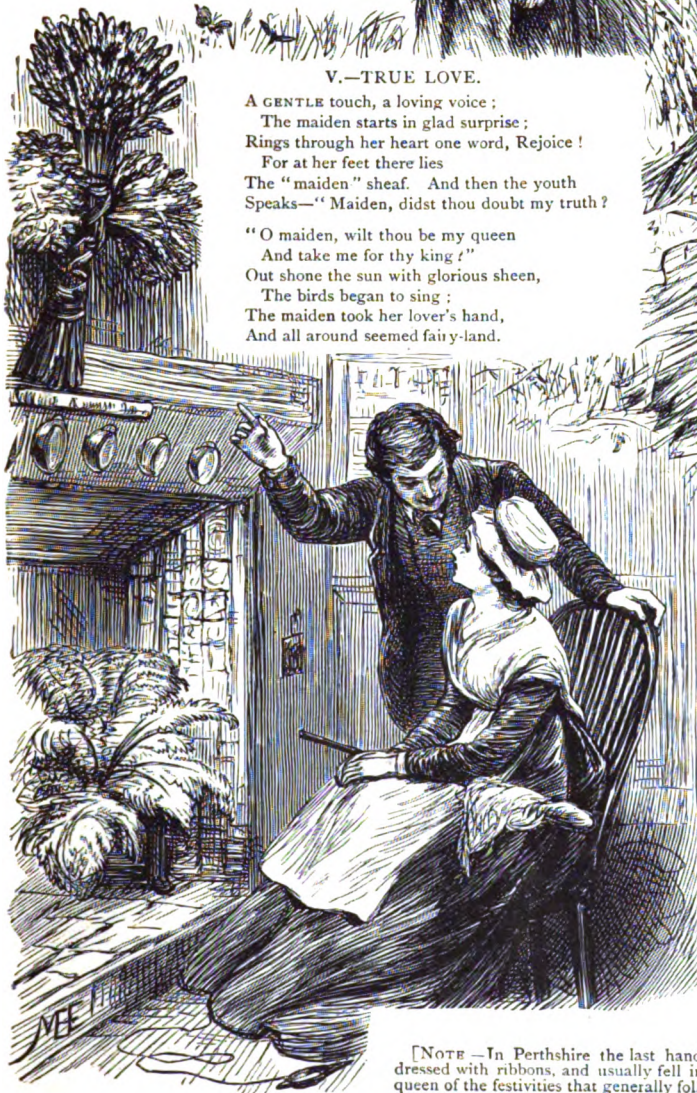
Bring out your hoard;
 Spread festive board;
 For merry we'll revel and feast to-night;
 To youth and maid
 Be homage paid
 Who over the wheat-sheaf their vows did plight,
 All amongst the golden corn.

The maid shall be
 Our queen, and we
 Will joyfully crown her with yellow wheat;
 The sheaf we bear
 Be her sceptre rare;
 And we merry reapers will bow at her feet,
 Singing, Heigho! the golden corn.

V.—TRUE LOVE.

A GENTLE touch, a loving voice;
 The maiden starts in glad surprise;
 Rings through her heart one word, Rejoice!
 For at her feet there lies
 The "maiden" sheaf. And then the youth
 Speaks—"Maiden, didst thou doubt my truth?"

"O maiden, wilt thou be my queen
 And take me for thy king?"
 Out shone the sun with glorious sheen,
 The birds began to sing;
 The maiden took her lover's hand,
 And all around seemed fairy-land.



VII.—THE WHEATEN CROSS.

THE feasting's over, and the harvest moon
 The latticed casement now is glinting through,
 Tinting the oak beams of the low-ceiled room
 With silver hue.

The white rays fall upon a quaint-formed cross
 That hangs in state above the wide hearth-place,
 From "maiden" wheat-sheaf fashioned by rude
 hands,
 With rustic grace;

Si'ving the date the blue-bound cross doth bear,
 The date of harvest, and the date of love,
 Of new-born joy that bears the fluttering heart
 Earth's cares above—

The date that ever in the coming years
 The farmer's daughter treasures up with pride,
 Remembering the promise that she gave
 By river-side.

Nor she alone, but he who crowned her queen,
 And kingly claimed her on the wedding morn,
 Points to the cross that won for him his bride
 Among the golden corn.

JULIA GODDARD.

[NOTE.—In Perthshire the last handful of corn cut was called the *maiden*. This was dressed with ribbons, and usually fell into the hands of the prettiest girl, who was made queen of the festivities that generally followed the harvestings. The custom is now obsolete.]



THE APPROACH OF WINTER.

WHEN dry leaves fall in golden shower,
 The sport of every breeze ;
 When biting winds, with cruel power,
 Wail through the forest trees ;
 When Nature seems content to crave
 Rest till another year—
 Then Autumn's hastening to the grave,
 And Winter's near !

When Man is forced to feel and know
 That Life is well-nigh done ;
 When failing limbs and powers show
 His course is almost run ;
 When he begins to dream of rest
 From earthly hope or fear—
 Life's Autumn's fading in the west,
 And Winter's near !



THE WINTER OF LIFE.



WHEN forest trees are bare and birds are still,
 And busy Nature seems about to sleep ;
 When fogs and mists with silent footsteps creep
 Across the land, like giant shapes of ill ;
 When keen winds blow, and every stream and rill
 Lies icebound, and the feathery snowflakes fall
 And hide the earth beneath a pure white pall—
 Then is the old year's Winter, dark and chill.

And when the failing limbs yield day by day
 Their former pride and strength, and when the brain
 Has lost its old-time power to dare and do ;
 When children's children round the fireside play ;
 When love and hope and faith alone remain—
 Then Life has reached its dim weird Winter too.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

DEAR, dost thou mind the day in God's heaven far away?
 Is there left aught of memory for anything of clay?
 Do clinging yearnings, tendril-like, for ever earthward stray?
 Husband, art thou *alone* in shadow of the Throne,
 Until the welcome shall be said unto thy wife—thine own?

Nay, heart! for love Divine hath stilled the cry for *thine*;
 The Everlasting Arms have hushed his agony for mine;
 There is no yearning where the flowers of Paradise entwine.
 Upon the Father's breast my dearer life is blest,
 Our golden wedding-day beholds him in eternal rest.

And yet—God's love doth beat in pity vast and sweet,
 All human in sublimity of tenderness complete,
 All human as when once on earth the babes clung round His feet,
 And when His head bowed down in halo of the crown
 He bore lest soul as dark as mine should tremble at His frown.



Up in the heaven of Christ, baptised in love unpriced,
 Where glory of the Lamb for aye as sunlight hath sufficed,
 All tenderness of heaven and earth hath reached its best and highest;
 And even in thy bliss, thou mayest remember *this*—
 That fifty years ago to-day I kissed a wife's first kiss.

Fifty years ago! since the veil was white as snow
 Which the bride-maidens, laughing, on the orange-wreath did throw;
 (Where are they all, those happy ones of fifty years ago?)
 Our marriage chimes were pealing, over summer meadows stealing.
 When, lip to lip, the late-plighted troth husband and wife were sealing.

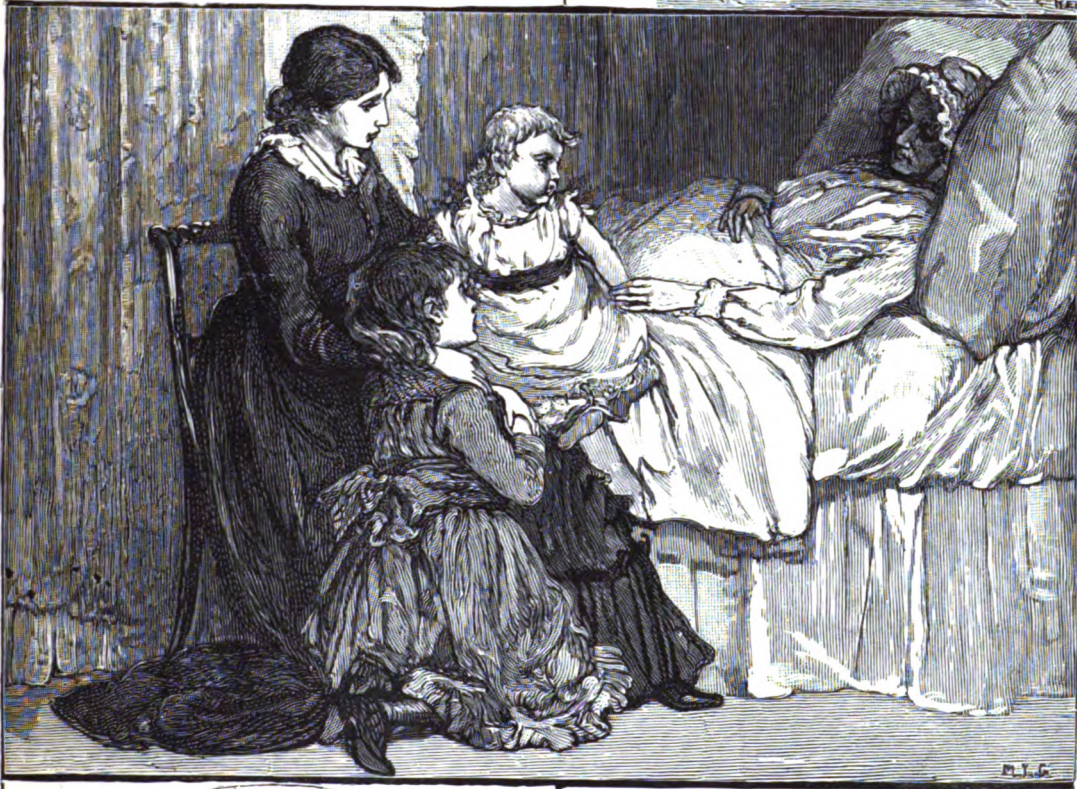
Then hand in hand we passed, and clasped each other fast,
 Into a land of blessing where the flowers should always last,
 Into an Eden where the skies were never overcast,
 Into a world of love where all below, above,
 Should seem as radiant as the stars, and tender as the dove.

Ah, me ! there came the thrill of sudden shuddering chill,
When dawned a lovely little life, and as we blessed, grew still,
When looked an angel on our world, and fluttered from its ill ;
Ah, me ! we sorrowed sore, my soul seemed welling o'er,
Yet faltered closer to the heart that gave me more and more.

Oh, thou, my dearest, best, my earthly stay and rest !
Five years and forty side by side side up-hill and down we pressed,
And never an ungentle word, and ne'er a look unblest ;
Oh, purest heart and fond, that led me still *beyond*
And taught me all of heaven that lies within an earthly bond.

The years so swiftly fled, and many a flower lay dead,
The flowers of hope for wealth and fame that bloomed when we
were wed ;

But we were satisfied, for God gave sweeter buds instead—
Blue eyes shone into mine, with the dear light of thine,
And children called thee "father," as they spelt the word Divine.



The children, one by one, have fluttered hence, and gone ;
I'm dying, dying, dying out like last hues of the sun ;
I scarcely mind how many feet about us used to run ;
The birds have flown away, the flock has learnt to stray,
They sometimes bring their little ones that I may touch and pray.

But though some memories sleep, *one* love, *one* yearning deep
A'live within this fading heart eternally doth keep,
There is a flood which every pulse doth still for ever steep :
Oh, why art thou away, on this our marriage-day,
Thou who didst promise by my side, through weal, through woe
to stay ?

"Till death us twain shall part !" Oh, husband of my heart !
There is *no* death, *no* parting, that my soul should shrink or start ;
This golden ring, our wedding-ring, shall be my rule and chart—
Our ring for ever found linked in an endless round,
The symbol of *eternal* love, that waits on deathless ground !

MARGARET S. MAC RITCHIE.



THE GARDEN SEAT.

THE garden seat was overgrown in spring
With young, sweet flowers swathed in purest
green ;

I saw a little child her toy-book bring,
With pictures of the fays and fairy queen ;
She played in wonderment upon the seat,
And laughed, with laughing blossoms o'er her head ;
She sat with daisies round about her feet,
Till she was called to supper and to bed.

The seat in summertide was in the shade
Of mingling boughs that swayed unto the ground,
And flecked the path, and pleasant music made ;
And bees were buzzing in the blooms around :
A maiden with a book of love-tales came,
And read a sweet romance, to her all truth ;
She closed the book, and whispered some one's name,
Then went away to meet a favoured youth.

When misty autumn came, and currants hung
In heavy, ripened clusters by the wall,
Chill winds came from the meadow-lands and swung
The coloured trees that let their jewels fall :
Upon the seat a married couple stayed,
With just a touch of care in their content ;
They watched the leaves that on the dry path played,
Then arm-in-arm away they slowly went.

When winter came, and all the flow'rs were lost,
And cold winds shrieked, and trees were black and
bare,

The garden seat was whitened with the frost,
And sparrows hopped in vain for crumbs there :
An old man came alone, with pale cheeks worn,
And sat till night, and then he did not go ;
The snow fell with the dark, and in the morn
The old man yet was there—still as the snow.

THE FIRST SNOWFALL.

THE leafless trees were black and wet,
 Half hid in chilly mist, last night—
 This morn each wears a coronet,
 With purest crystal fires alight.

We in the dark with dreams were still,
 When silently the elves came down,
 To throw a great robe round the hill,
 And muffle all the sleeping town.

The sceptre is in Winter's hand—
 His willing troop of Northern fays
 Have thrown his jewels o'er the land,
 In their enchanted midnight maze.

The hall seems, as it stands alone
 With red sun on its frosted panes,
 Like a palace to dreamers shown
 In a proud fairy lord's domains.

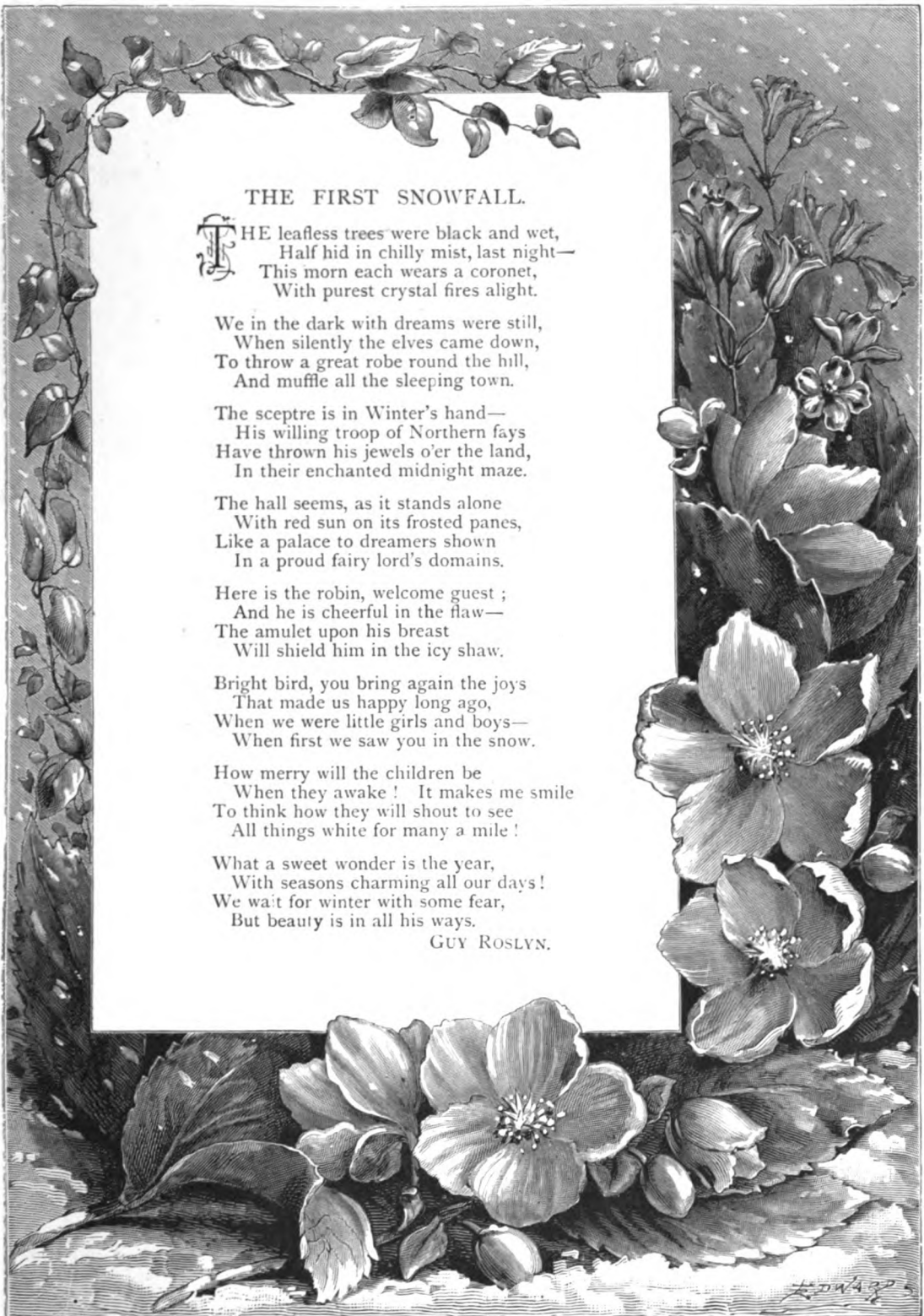
Here is the robin, welcome guest ;
 And he is cheerful in the flaw—
 The amulet upon his breast
 Will shield him in the icy shaw.

Bright bird, you bring again the joys
 That made us happy long ago,
 When we were little girls and boys—
 When first we saw you in the snow.

How merry will the children be
 When they awake ! It makes me smile
 To think how they will shout to see
 All things white for many a mile !

What a sweet wonder is the year,
 With seasons charming all our days !
 We wait for winter with some fear,
 But beauty is in all his ways.

GUY ROSLYN.



SONGS OF THE BELLS.

WEDDING BELLS.

MERRY, merry through the dells,
Comes the sound of wedding bells ;
" Mirth and pleasure,
Heaven's blessing ;
Every treasure
Worth possessing,"
Is the glad some song they're singing ;
" Ever gladness,
Never sadness,"
Seems the burden of their ringing —
Seems the burden of their ringing.
Ring on, bells, and let your song
Float the busy air along :
" What though sorrow
Never dieth,
Till to-morrow
Far he flyeth ;
And to-day all hearts are singing :
' Mirth and gladness,
Never sadness,'
Is the burden of our ringing —
Is the burden of our ringing."

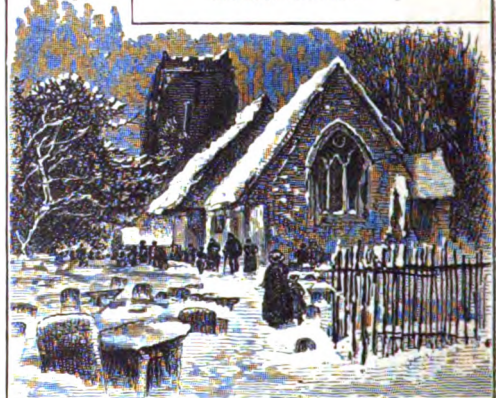
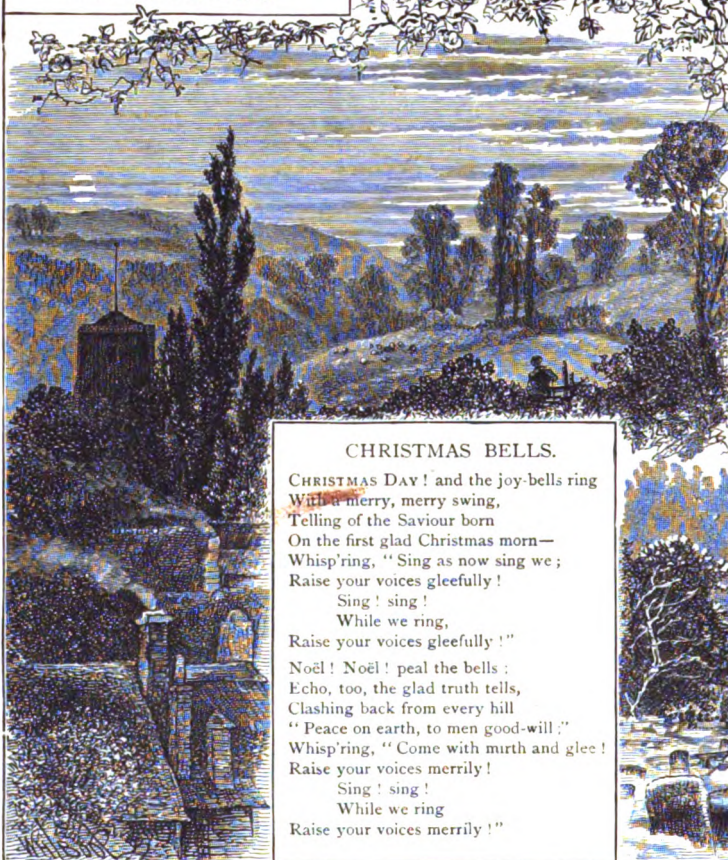


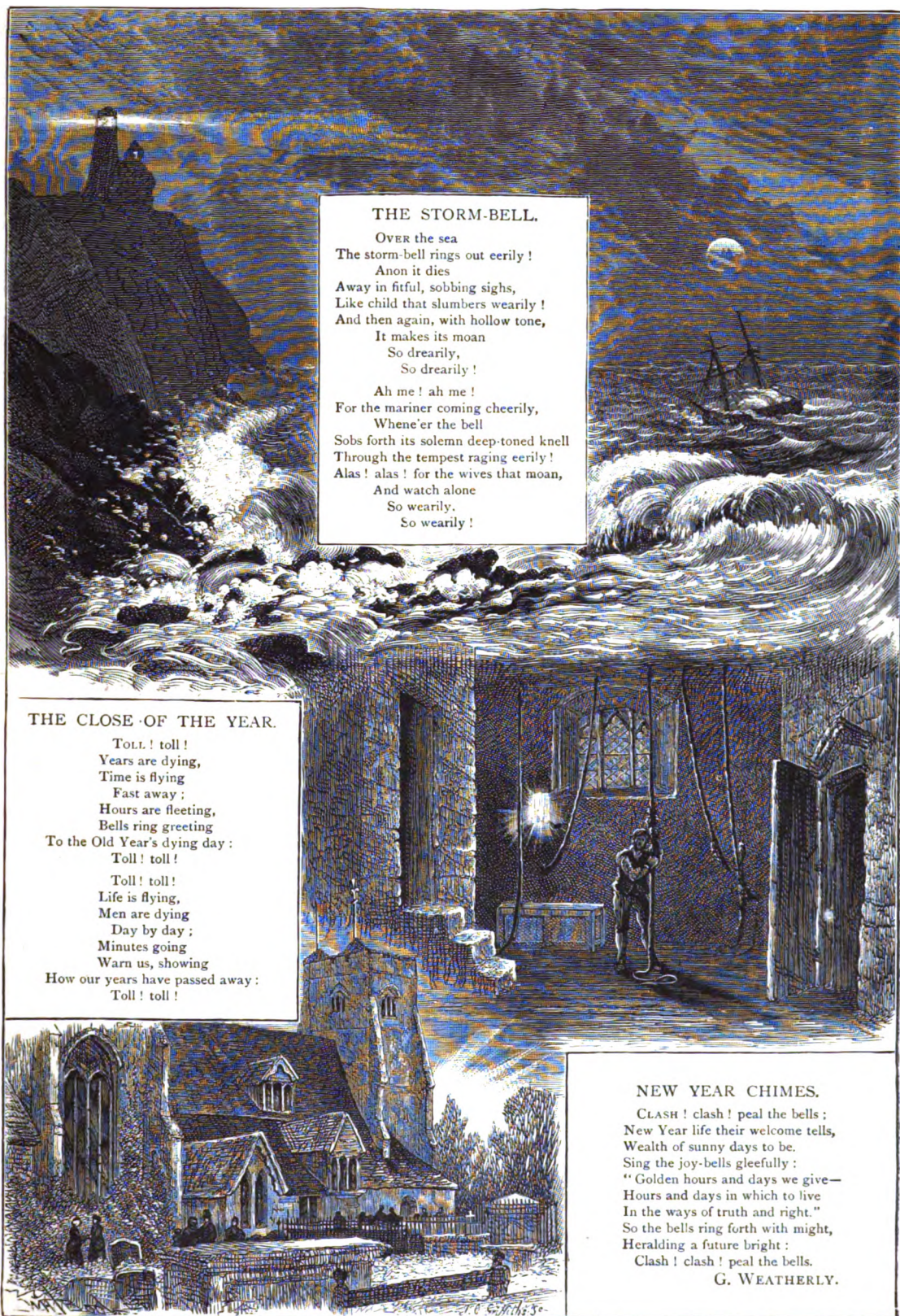
THE CURFEW.

LONG tangled skeins of mingled gold and
grey :
Bright fleecy clouds of sunlight all aglow
With crimson glory of the passing day,
That hotly blushes as she wends her way
The hills below :
Dim misty shades that haunt the fading
light :
Huge spectral shapes that stalk o'er hill
and dell :
The silver moon that peeps forth pure and
white :
Then loudly peals the herald of the night,
The curfew bell.
And this its song : " O weary world of men,
The worn Earth sleeps, soft-cradled on
Night's breast :
Lay by your toil, and care, and strife, and
then
Let sweetest slumber hide all from your
ken —
Lie down and rest !"

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

CHRISTMAS DAY ! and the joy-bells ring
With a merry, merry swing,
Telling of the Saviour born
On the first glad Christmas morn —
Whisp'ring, " Sing as now sing we ;
Raise your voices gleefully !
Sing ! sing !
While we ring,
Raise your voices gleefully !"
Noël ! Noël ! peal the bells ;
Echo, too, the glad truth tells,
Clashing back from every hill
" Peace on earth, to men good-will ;"
Whisp'ring, " Come with mirth and glee !
Raise your voices merrily !
Sing ! sing !
While we ring
Raise your voices merrily !"





THE STORM-BELL.

OVER the sea
 The storm-bell rings out eerily !
 Anon it dies
 Away in fitful, sobbing sighs,
 Like child that slumbers wearily !
 And then again, with hollow tone,
 It makes its moan
 So drearily,
 So drearily !
 Ah me ! ah me !
 For the mariner coming cheerily,
 Whene'er the bell
 Sobs forth its solemn deep-toned knell
 Through the tempest raging eerily !
 Alas ! alas ! for the wives that moan,
 And watch alone
 So wearily.
 So wearily !

THE CLOSE-OF THE YEAR.

TOLL ! toll !
 Years are dying,
 Time is flying
 Fast away ;
 Hours are fleeting,
 Bells ring greeting
 To the Old Year's dying day :
 Toll ! toll !
 Toll ! toll !
 Life is flying,
 Men are dying
 Day by day ;
 Minutes going
 Warn us, showing
 How our years have passed away :
 Toll ! toll !

NEW YEAR CHIMES.

CLASH ! clash ! peal the bells ;
 New Year life their welcome tells,
 Wealth of sunny days to be.
 Sing the joy-bells gleefully :
 " Golden hours and days we give—
 Hours and days in which to live
 In the ways of truth and right."
 So the bells ring forth with might,
 Heralding a future bright :
 Clash ! clash ! peal the bells.

G. WEATHERLY.



WOODS IN WINTER.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

WHEN Winter winds are pier-
cing chill,
And through the hawthorn
blows the gale,
With solemn feet I tread the hill
That overbrows the lonely vale.

O'er the bare upland, and away
Through the long reach of desert
woods,
The embracing sunbeams chastely
play,
And gladden these deep solitudes.

Where, twisted round the barren
oak,
The summer vine in beauty clung,
And summer winds the stillness
broke,
The crystal icicle is hung.

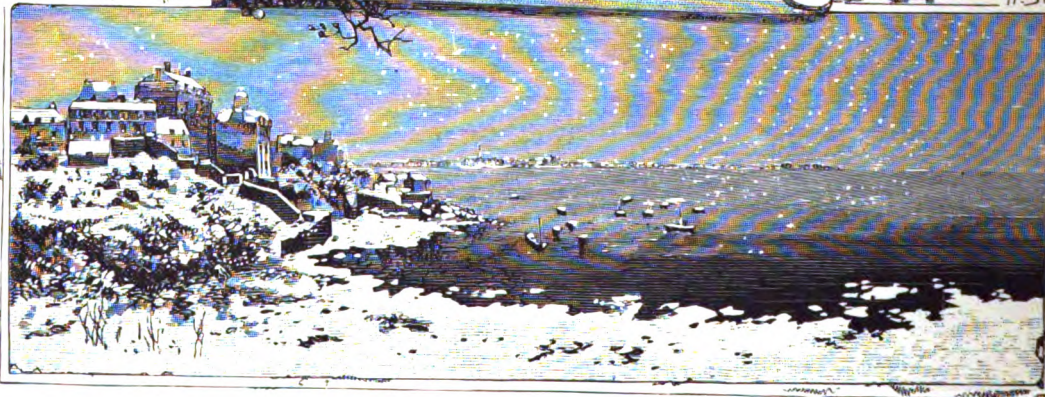
Where, from their frozen urns,
mute springs
Pour out the river's gradual tide,

Shrilly the skater's iron rings,
And voices fill the woodland side.

Alas! how changed from the fair
scene,
When birds sang out their mellow
lay,
And winds were soft, and woods
were green,
And the song ceased not with the
day!

But still wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods! within your
crowd;
And gathering winds, in hoarse
accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.

Chi'l airs and wintry winds! my ear
Has grown familiar with your
song;
I hear it in the opening year—
I listen and it cheers me long.



THE OLD FAIR STORY : A SONG.

A MOTHER kissed her baby,
 Rocking it into rest,
 And gently clasped within her arms,
 It nestled in her breast.
 The old fair story,
 Set round in glory,
 Wherever life is found ;
 For oh ! it's love, it's love, they say,
 That makes the world go round.

A fair-faced boy and maiden
 Passed through the yellow wheat ;
 And their hands were clasped together,
 And the flowers grew at their feet.
 The old fair story,
 Set round in glory,
 Wherever life is found ;
 For oh ! it's love, it's love, they say,
 That makes the world go round.

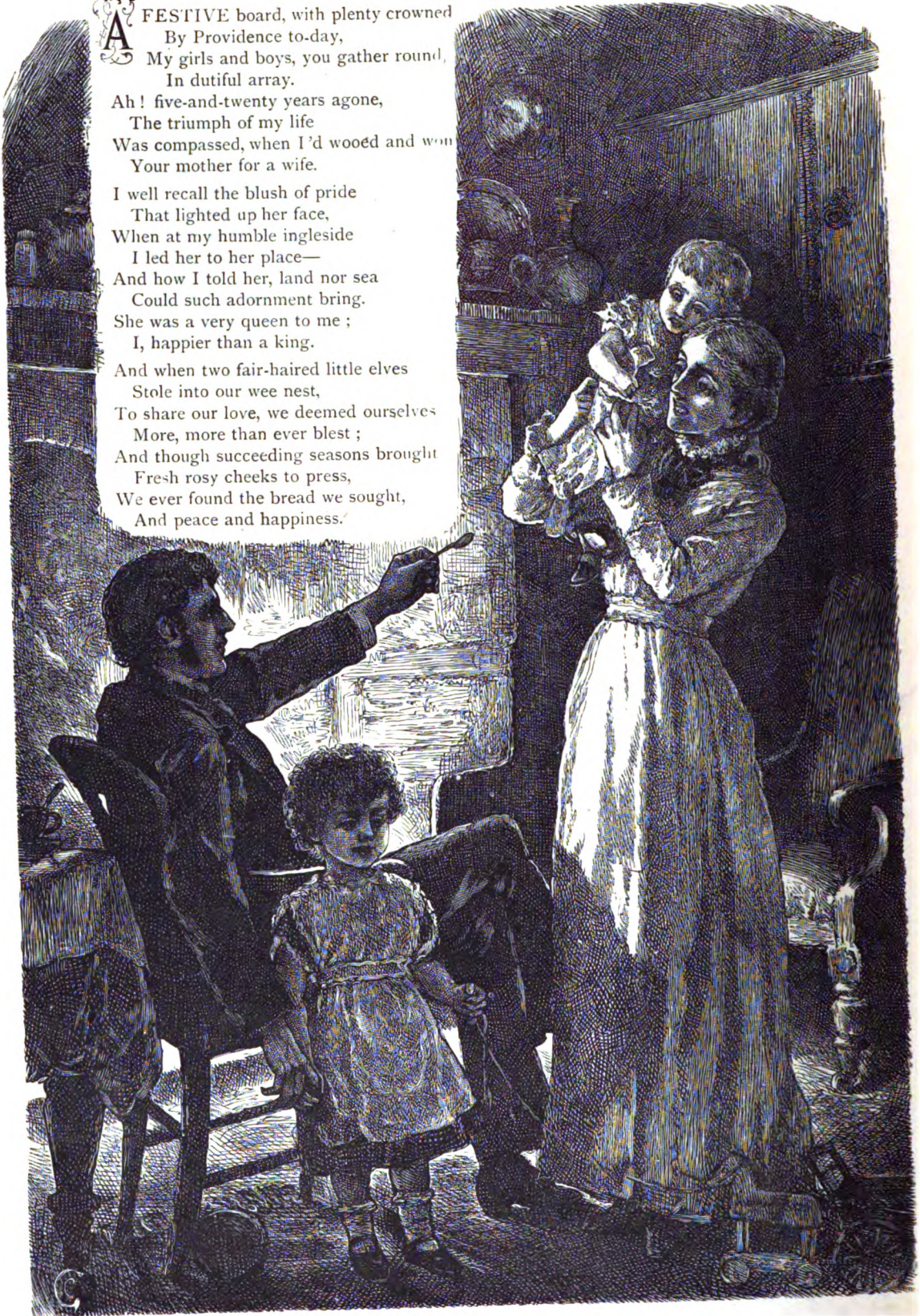
An old man and a wrinkled wife,
 Amid the fair spring weather :
 " We've shared our sorrows and our joys,
 God grant we die together."
 The old fair story,
 Set round in glory,
 Wherever life is found ;
 For oh ; it's love, it's love, they say,
 That makes the world go round.

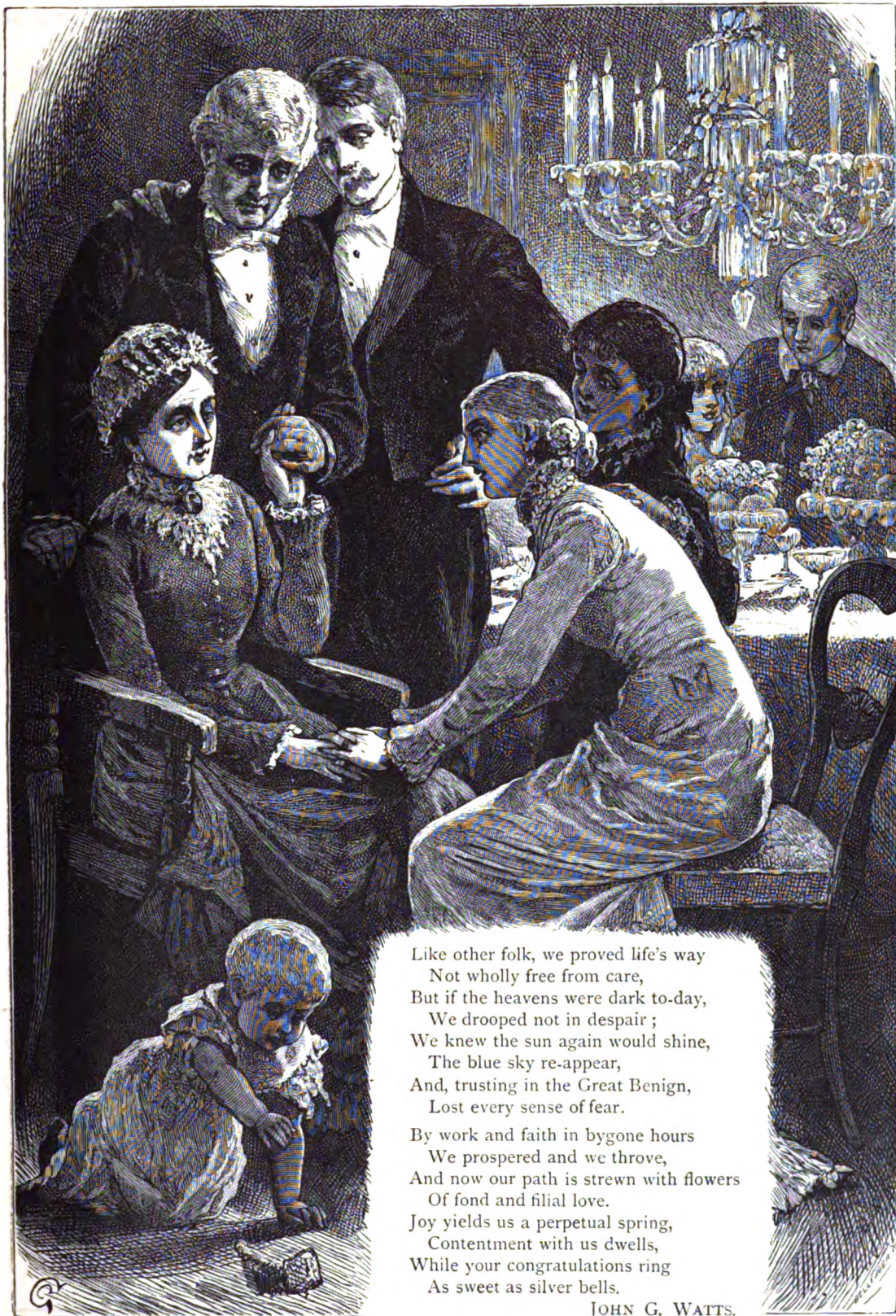
E. H.



THE CHANGING YEAR.
THE SILVER WEDDING

A FESTIVE board, with plenty crowned
By Providence to-day,
My girls and boys, you gather round,
In dutiful array.
Ah! five-and-twenty years ago,
The triumph of my life
Was compassed, when I'd wooed and won
Your mother for a wife.
I well recall the blush of pride
That lighted up her face,
When at my humble ingleside
I led her to her place—
And how I told her, land nor sea
Could such adornment bring.
She was a very queen to me ;
I, happier than a king.
And when two fair-haired little elves
Stole into our wee nest,
To share our love, we deemed ourselves
More, more than ever blest ;
And though succeeding seasons brought
Fresh rosy cheeks to press,
We ever found the bread we sought,
And peace and happiness.





Like other folk, we proved life's way
 Not wholly free from care,
 But if the heavens were dark to-day,
 We drooped not in despair ;
 We knew the sun again would shine,
 The blue sky re-appear,
 And, trusting in the Great Benign,
 Lost every sense of fear.

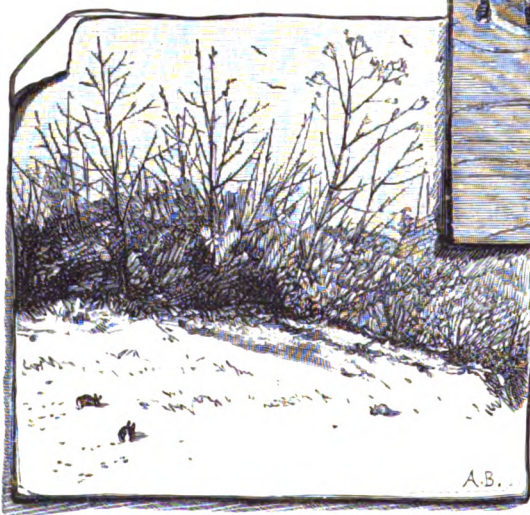
By work and faith in bygone hours
 We prospered and we throve,
 And now our path is strewn with flowers
 Of fond and filial love.
 Joy yields us a perpetual spring,
 Contentment with us dwells,
 While your congratulations ring
 As sweet as silver bells.

JOHN G. WATTS.

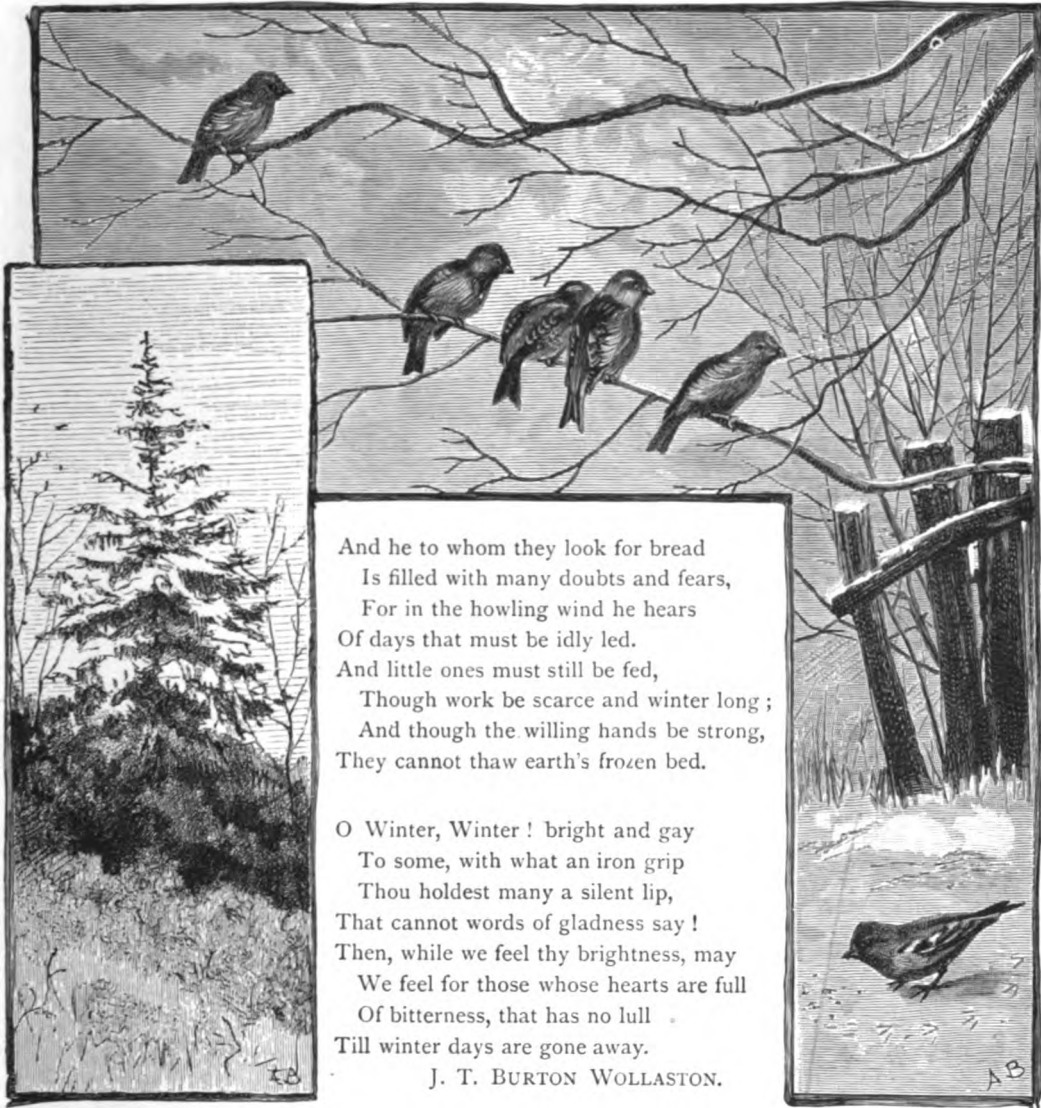


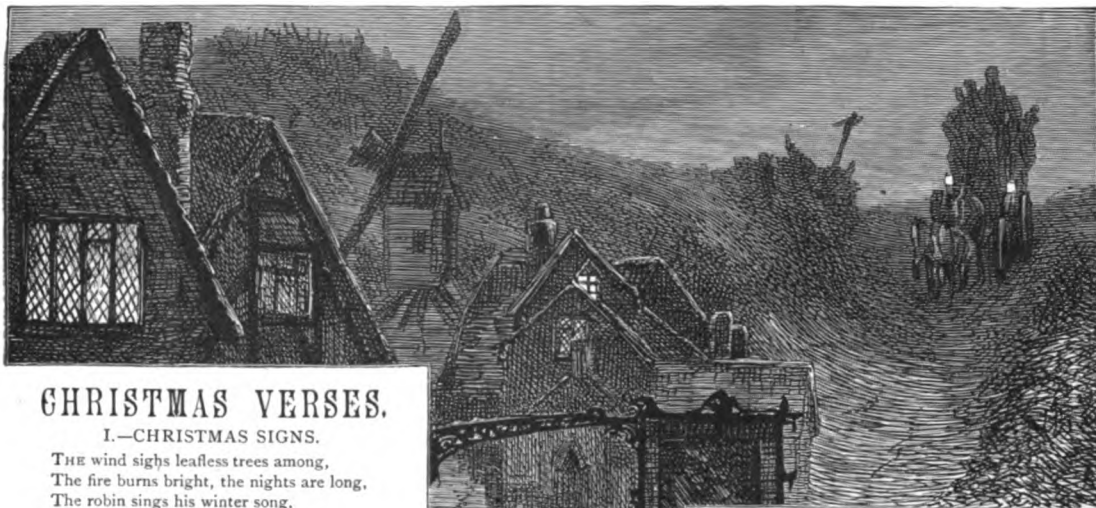
WINTER

THE cold winds from the northward roar,
 The quivering snowflakes thickly fall,
 And cover with a velvet pall
 The russet sward of mead and moor ;
 And standing at his cottage door
 The labourer thinks of labour scant,
 And sees the haggard hand of want
 Throw shadows on his chamber floor.



The children shout for joy, and cry,
 "A merry Christmas !" as they see
 The whitened cloak of bush and tree,
 And the soft feathers in the sky.
 They know not why the father's eye
 Is sad and heavy through the storm,
 They only know the fire is warm,
 And that the skating-time is nigh.





CHRISTMAS VERSES.

I.—CHRISTMAS SIGNS.

The wind sighs leafless trees among,
The fire burns bright, the nights are long,
The robin sings his winter song,
And the Christmas snow is falling.

Frost crystals lend their shining light
To rubies from the holly bright,
And mistletoe's pure pearls of white,
When the Christmas snow is falling
To those that smile, and those that weep,
Come peaceful visions as they sleep:
For Christmas angels vigil keep,

When the Christmas snow is falling,
Age thinks of many a Christmas past,
And hears old stories in the blast
Of Christmas Days too bright to last,
When the Christmas snow is falling.

While youth but learns from that same breeze
Of countless Christmas Days like these,
And glorious golden prospects sees,
When the Christmas snow is falling.



II.—THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

A FLASH of light, a merry hum,
And peals of rippling laughter sweet,
The pattering of tiny feet,
And, lo, the little children come.

A stately fir-tree rears its head,
With stars and tapers all a-blaze;
And quivering in the fairy rays,
The glittering, loaded branches spread.

And childish eyes are sparkling bright,
And childish hearts with joy o'erflow,
And on that Birth-day long ago
They ponder with a grave delight.

Then to their gifts they turn once more,
And in the present sunshine lost,
They fear no future tempest-tossed,
But unto fairy regions soar.

No cares, no fears, a happy time
Of laughter; tears that cannot stay;
An April day, a year of May,
Pealed in and out with Christmas chime.

III.—THE MISTLETOE.

SWIFTLY time is onward stealing,
Christmas revelries revealing;
And the mistletoe is showing
Pearls more precious than are glowing
In the depths of Persian waters;
For old England's blooming daughters,
Blushing, slily smiling, know
Magic lies in mistletoe.

Many a secret sweet repose
Underneath the moss-veiled roses;
But the mistletoe hath folden
Hearts within its branches olden,
And no plant so sweet as this is,
With its wealth of Christmas kisses;
Youth and maiden come to know,
Magic lies in mistletoe.

Many a Christmas coming, going,
With its festal joys o'erflowing,
Sees the mistletoe still reigning
And its subjects soft enchainning;
Many a sad heart making lighter,
Many a merry one the brighter,
Through the magic that men know
Lies in white-gemmed mistletoe.



IV.—WASSAIL.

UPRAISE the Christmas bowl to-night
And let a health go round ;
To those we love in every land,
To those who 'neath our roof-tree stand,
May Christmas joys abound.

To those that love us, joy and peace,
Whether afar or near ;
To old and young, to rich and poor,
Be merry Christmas Days in store,
And hope in the New Year.

Ay, even to our foes we drink,
And what the worse are we ?
For if they hate, and we forgive,
'Tis ours the sweeter life to live,
Whilst theirs shall bitter be.

Upraise the bowl—we toast the last,
The one we love the best,
Whose love hath made our life to shine—
Turned earth to Paradise divine,
The work-day world to rest.

Upraise the Christmas bowl to-night,
And may each Christmas Day
Be hostei-sign where we may meet
All lovingly home-friends to greet,
And pledge those far away.



V.—IN THE SILVER AGE.

ROUND the fire the gossips sit,
Telling many an ancient story ;
Memory wreathes their brows to-night
With a golden Christmas glory.

Soft, like honey-dew, there flows
From their lips long stored-up treasures,
Of the days when they and Time
Ran a race in spring-tide pleasures.

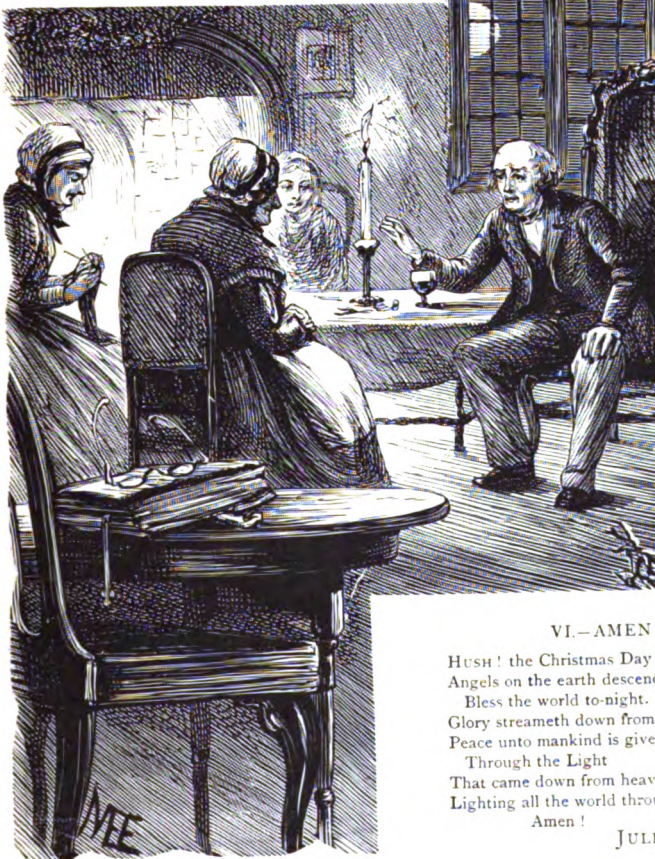
Gently, rev'rently they speak,
Smilingly, yet nigh to weeping,
Of the fair transfigured past
Still a present with them keeping :

Tell of Christmas kisses felt,
E'en to-night, although the giver
Lies beneath the Christmas snow,
Out beyond the darksome river.

This one fell on battle-field,
That one sleeps beneath the billow,
And another faded, though
Loving hands had smoothed his pillow.

Up they rise at Memory's call,
All the lost familiar faces ;
Who shall speak the words they spake,
Who shall stand in their old places ?

Hush ! no grief or care for them—
Hark ! the Christmas angels calling,
Peace to us and peace to them,
When the Christmas snow is falling.



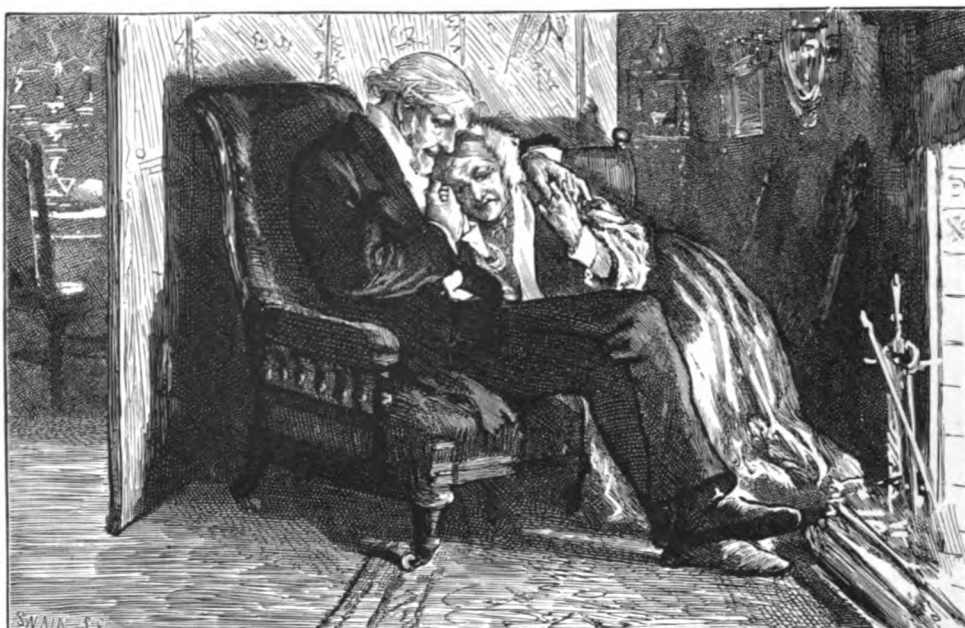
VI.—AMEN !

HUSH ! the Christmas Day is ending,
Angels on the earth descending
Bless the world to-night.
Glory streameth down from heaven,
Peace unto mankind is given
Through the Light
That came down from heaven above,
Lighting all the world through Love.

Amen !

JULIA GODDARD.





AN OLD MAN'S LOVE-SONG.

COME to the faithful arms
 Longing for thee !
 What are more youthful charms,
 Darling, to me ?
 Dearer the lines of care
 On thy pure brow ;
 Wife with the snow-white hair,
 Come to me now !

Kiss, dear, the cheek that lies
 Close, close to thine ;
 Raise, love, thy patient eyes
 Fondly to mine—
 Eyes that have shone so bright
 Forty long years—
 Now is their tender light
 Faded with tears.

Sing to me sweet and low,
 With thy dear voice ;
 Here in the fire's warm glow
 Let us rejoice,
 As when thou first didst come,
 Brightening my life—
 Angel of heart and home,
 Fond little wife !

Now that their wings have grown,
 Far from our nest
 All the young birds have flown—
 Dearest and best ;
 Counting the lonely hours
 We two remain—
 They have their crowns of flowers,
 We loss and pain.

Weep out thy sacred grief
 Here on my heart :
 Sweet was their stay, but brief,
 Soon to depart ;
 Still with the joy of old
 Breathe each loved name—
 They have but left the fold,
 We did the same.

E'en though they all are gone,
 Smile, darling, smile !
 Think how each treasured one
 Lingered awhile ;
 Look up, dear wife, and say,
 Softly with me,
 " They have but flown away,
 Birds must be free ! "

FANNY FORRESTER.



THE GOLDEN WEDDING.

IT only seems like yesterday :
 Yet fifty years have passed away
 Since at the altar, side by side,
 I stood with you, my happy bride.

And now our children's children stand,
 Close gathered round, an eager band :
 Whilst we recall, with smiles and tears,
 The joy and grief of fifty years.

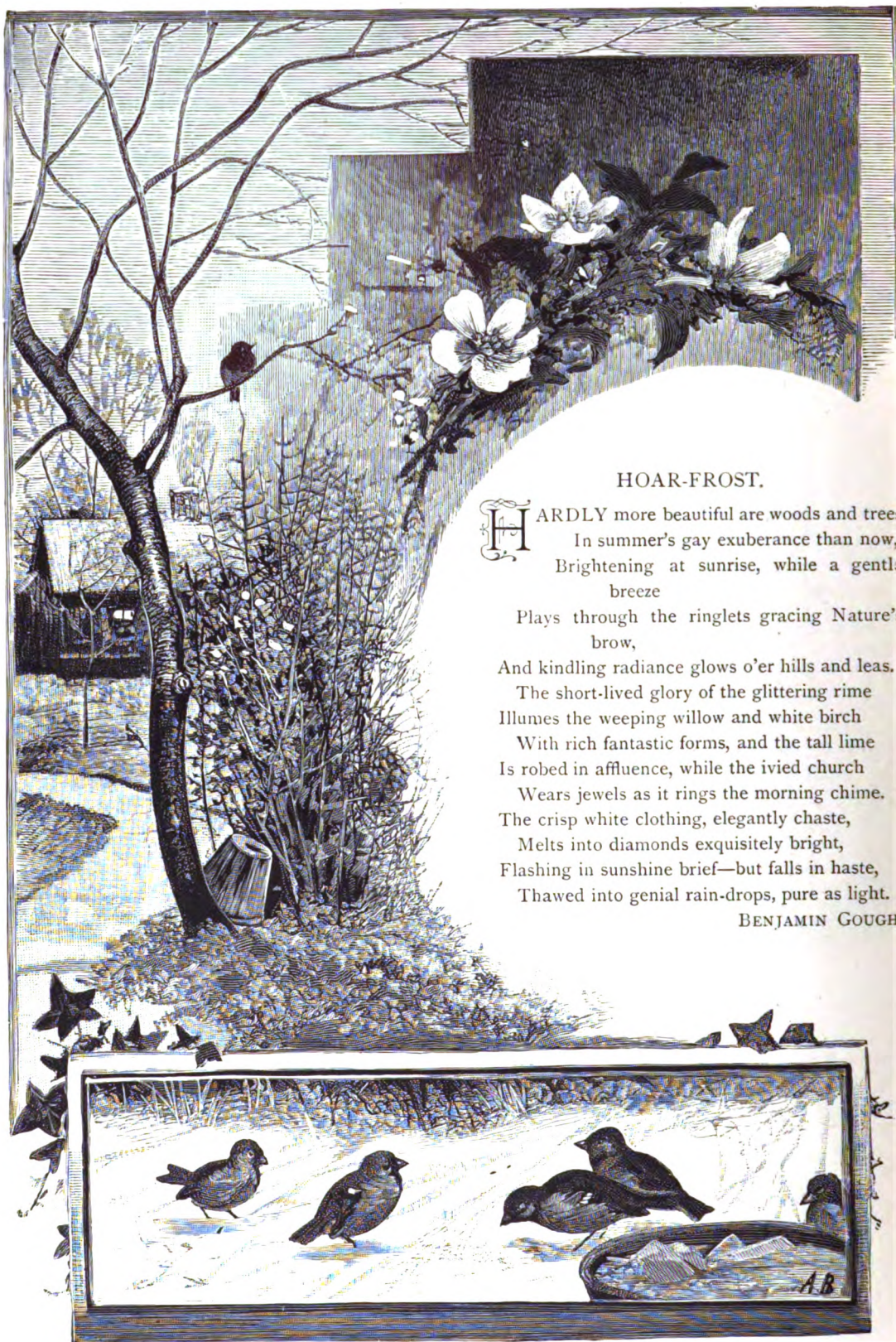
For we have known the cares of life,
 Sweetheart, since we were man and wife :

Yet have not loved each other less,
 Through fifty years of happiness.

When clouds have threatened storm and rain,
 The skies have always cleared again,
 And fifty years have come and passed,
 And brought us sunshine at the last.

And now that we are old and grey,
 We trust in Him, our guide and stay,
 Our constant and unchanging Friend,
 To lead us to the journey's end.

J. R. EASTWOOD.

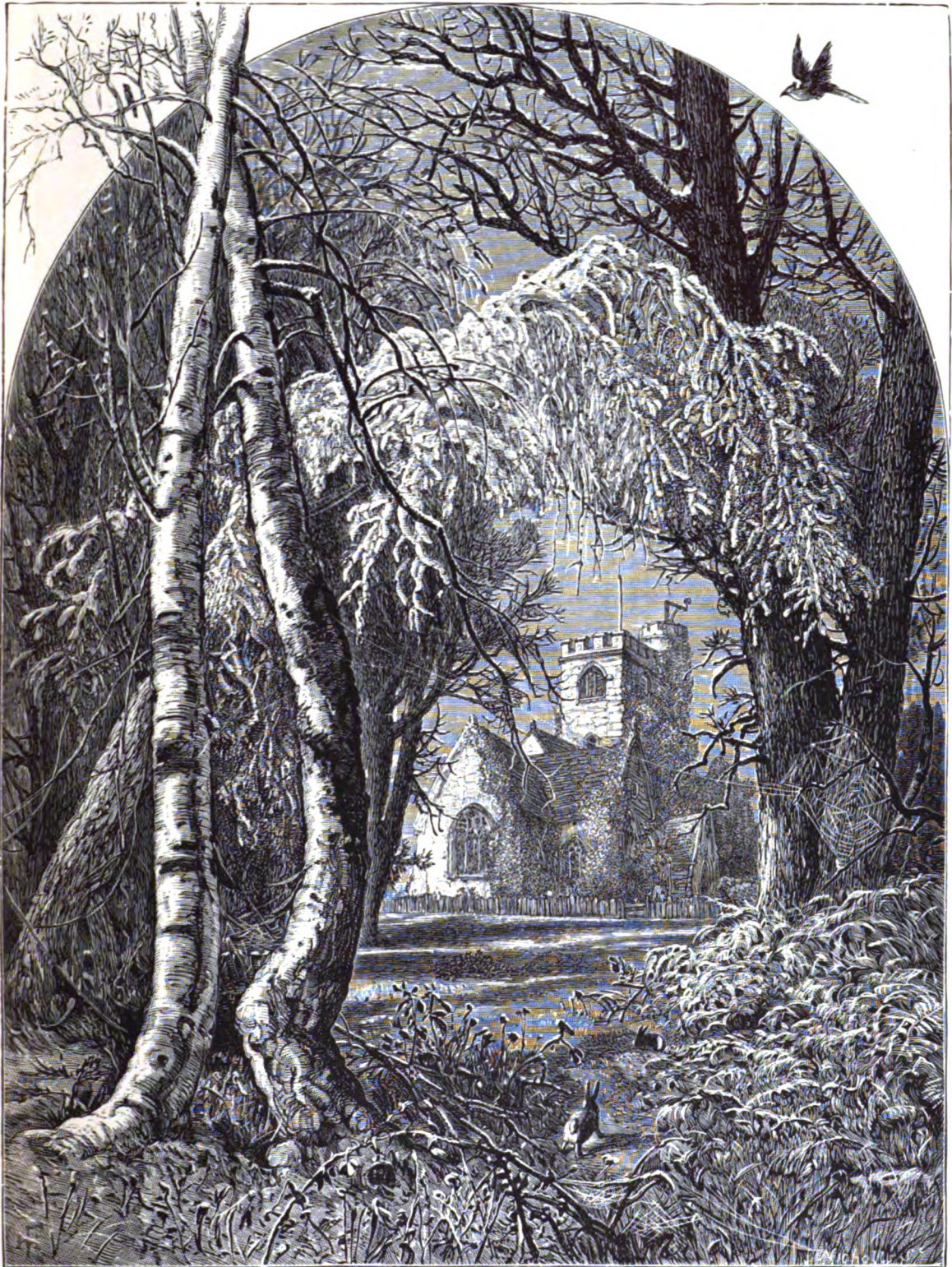


HOAR-FROST.

HARDLY more beautiful are woods and trees
 In summer's gay exuberance than now,
 Brightening at sunrise, while a gentle
 breeze

Plays through the ringlets gracing Nature's
 brow,
 And kindling radiance glows o'er hills and leas.
 The short-lived glory of the glittering rime
 Illumes the weeping willow and white birch
 With rich fantastic forms, and the tall lime
 Is robed in affluence, while the ivied church
 Wears jewels as it rings the morning chime.
 The crisp white clothing, elegantly chaste,
 Melts into diamonds exquisitely bright,
 Flashing in sunshine brief—but falls in haste,
 Thawed into genial rain-drops, pure as light.

BENJAMIN GOUGH.







WHERE four roads met, an ancient sign-
 post stood—
 Its wizened arms all lichen'd o'er and grey,
 Half-fallen from their sockets through decay
 That daily triumphed o'er the crumbling wood ;
 And though it lingered on in hardihood,
 'Twas but a relic of a by-gone day,
 For all its guiding words were worn away :

With long neglect had vanished former good.
 So stationed at the cross-roads of the heart
 Is that true sign-post Conscience, clear and
 bright :
 Which, cherished, ever points our way aright ;
 From which, neglected, day by day depart
 All grace and virtue, till at length it stands
 A dull dead sign with empty nerveless hands.
 G. WEATHERLY.



THE CAROL-SINGERS.

TWO sweet fair faces on a Christmas night—
Two pure girl-voices rich with such sweet tone,
That listeners stand entranced and Time's swift
flight
Passes unknown.

Grandly the story of the Saviour's birth
Is told by these sweet singers to the throng;
Nobly the clarion-notes of "Peace on earth"
Ring forth in song.

With voices all attuned to harmony,
And hearts that rise and leap with every note,

The singers stand, and wild-bird melody
Trills from each throat.

So sweet the song that every listener there
Sees the glad story as in words of gold,
Like some fair picture traced with wondrous care
In days of old.

All hail! the glorious heaven-sent gift of song,
Mighty to him who has and him who hears!
The one great power enduring ever strong
Through all the years!



CHRISTMAS EVE.

ONE hour in all the year is sweet,
And passing sweet the rest beside:
When loving friends, long parted, meet,
And hearts with wealth of welcome beat
At Christmas-tide.

Dear Christmas Eve! When love is strong,
And strife and falsehood pass away,
And kindly actions round us throng,
And memories of ancient wrong
Die out for aye!

And yet in this wide world we know
There must be always some who grieve,
Who all unloved, unloving, go,
Or sit enthroned amid their woe
On Christmas Eve.

God grant to hearts thus overcast
Such love and joy as we receive,
That, free from spectres of the past,
They, too, may find sweet peace at last
On Christmas Eve!



BARE BRANCHES:

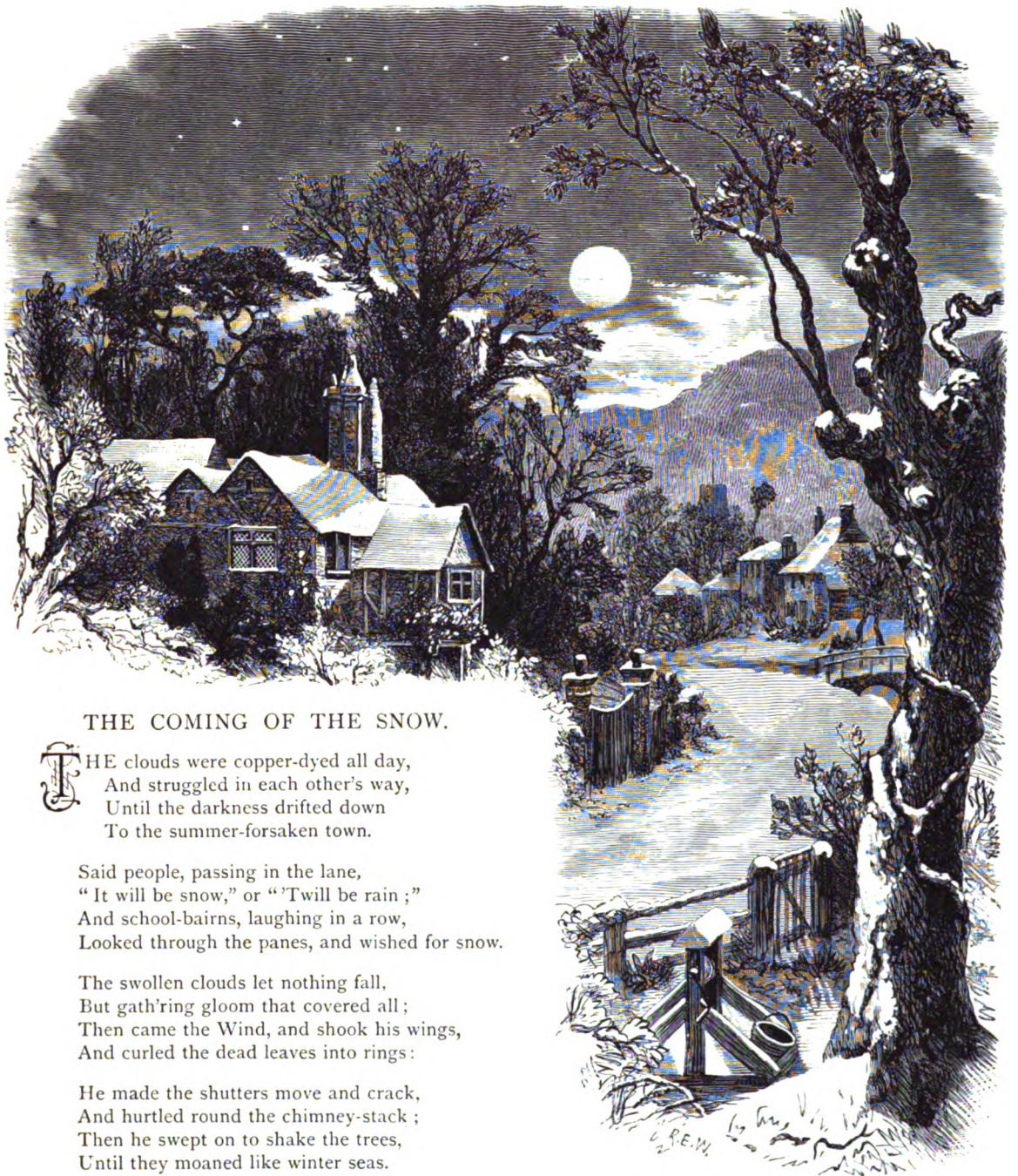
THE wind blows bitterly
through the wood,
And the wet leaves break and
fall ;
But God made winter and knows
it good,
And winter comes to all.

O the days of summer are long
and fair,
With blue unclouded sky ;
But the very sun grows hard to
bear,
And the grass turns brown
and dry.

O patient pathos of winter
skies,
Spread out o'er the withered
plain,
Under your hush a secret lies,
Which is not all of pain.

I know the leaves from the trees
are strown,
That the birds have taken
wing—
They will only find that the
trees are grown
When they come back in
spring.

I. F. M.



THE COMING OF THE SNOW.

THE clouds were copper-dyed all day,
And struggled in each other's way,
Until the darkness drifted down
To the summer-forsaken town.

Said people, passing in the lane,
"It will be snow," or "Twill be rain ;"
And school-bairns, laughing in a row,
Looked through the panes, and wished for snow.

The swollen clouds let nothing fall,
But gath'ring gloom that covered all ;
Then came the Wind, and shook his wings,
And curled the dead leaves into rings :

He made the shutters move and crack,
And hurtled round the chimney-stack ;
Then he swept on to shake the trees,
Until they moaned like winter seas.

Soon he went whistling o'er the hill,
And all the trees again stood still ;
Then, through the dark, the snow came down,
And muffled all the sleeping town.

The keen stars looked out through the night,
And flecked the boughs with flakes of light ;
And moving clouds revealed the moon,
To make on earth a faery noon.

Then Winter went unto his throne,
That with a million diamonds shone ;
A crown of stars was on his head,
And round him his rich robes were spread.

At morn the bairns laughed with delight,
To see the fields and hedges white ;
And folk said, as they hurried past,
"Good morning—Winter's come at last."



GRANNY'S EYES.

"When those that look out of the windows be darkened."—ECCLES. xii. 3.

RAPT in a world of long ago,
 Granny sits dreaming half the day ;
 Life's eventide for her grows grey ;
 Even the sunset's lingering glow
 Fades fast away.

Dear Granny ! sun, and moon, and stars
 For her have lost their wonted light ;
 The eyes that once were sparkling bright
 Can see no more the golden bars,
 And all is night !

Yet God is good, and with the cross
 He sends such love her years to bless—
 Such wealth of patient tenderness—
 That day by day dear Granny's loss
 Grows less and less.

And children's children haunt the place
 Where Granny sits ; and, full of glee,
 They clamber wildly on her knee,

And love to kiss the dear old face
 That seems to see.

And one wee figure, quaintly wise,
 Will linger there when others play,
 And never care to run away :
 "We always call her 'Granny's Eyes,'"
 The children say.

For, hour by hour, by Granny's side
 The little maid will sit and read ;
 Or, perhaps, the tottering footsteps lead,
 So that the blind, with such fond guide,
 Can see indeed.

So Granny dear is glad and bright,
 Fully content on earth to stay,
 Till, in the Father's own good way,
 The sun shall shine, and all the night
 Be turned to day.

G. WEATHERLY.



LAST YEAR'S SNOW.



THE winter snow lay crisp
 and white,
 The cold pale winter
 moon above
 Grew brighter looking
 on our love,
 The stars were dancing
 with delight.

Each stirless twig, each
 leafless tree
 With crystal jewels coldly crowned,
 Listened and trembled at the sound
 Of the sweet words you spake to me.

The sad sea sobbing at our feet
 Paused, listened, hushed, then ebb'd away
 Beyond the boundary of the day,
 The joyous story to repeat.

A north wind shrieking overhead
 Caught the glad whisper and grew mild,

And grim December paused and smiled,
 Then passed us with a softer tread.

"My love, I love you," sweet and clear,
 You spake, a tear in either eye,
 "My love will live as long as I,
 And I so long as you are near."

I still am near, you still live on,
 But by your side another stands
 Whose right is there ; and we touch hands
 Lightly, nor think of days long gone.

I still am near, and still you live,
 And laugh, perchance, but what care I ?
 No more to me your smile or sigh
 Can any pain or pleasure give.

The sea still smiles 'twixt ebb and flow,
 December laughs with scornful glee,
 For last year's love for you and me
 Has passed away like last year's snow.



PURITY.

AT eventide the snow fell fast,
The village street lay white,
And while the silent night hours passed,
It hid the earth from sight ;

It wrapped the worn world in a shroud,
It blotted out the base ;
Age and decay before it bowed,
Death humbly hid his face.

But human crime, and want, and woe,
And ignorance black as night,
Alas ! alas ! the pure white snow
Can never hide from sight.

Ah me ! ah me ! if it could be
(God grant some time it may !)
That the fair white snow of purity
Should blot them out for aye !



MIDNIGHT MASS FOR THE DYING YEAR.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

YES, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared !
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely, sorely !

The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow ;
Caw ! caw ! the rooks are calling,
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe !

Through woods and mountain passes
The winds, like anthems, roll ;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing " Pray for this poor soul,
Pray, pray ! "

And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers ;
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain !

There he stands in the foul weather,
The foolish, fond Old Year,
Crowned with wild flowers and with heather,
Like weak, despised Lear,
A king—a king !

Then comes the summer-like day,
Bids the old man rejoice !
His joy ! his last ! oh, the old man gray
Loveth that ever-soft voice,
Gentle and low.

To the crimson woods he saith,
To the voice gentle and low
Of the soft air, like a daughter's breath,
" Pray do not mock me so !
Do not laugh at me ! "

And now the sweet day is dead ;
Cold in his arms it lies ;
No stain from its breath is spread
Over the glassy skies,
No mist or stain !

Then, too, the Old Year dieth,
And the forests utter a moan,
Like the voice of one who crieth
In the wilderness alone,
" Vex not his ghost ! "

Then comes, with an awful roar,
Gathering and sounding on,
The storm-wind from Labrador,
The wind Euroclydon,
The storm-wind !

Howl ! howl ! and from the forest
Sweep the red leaves away !
Would the sins that thou abhorrest,
O Soul ! could thus decay,
And be swept away !

For there shall come a mightier blast,
There shall be a darker day ;
And the stars, from heaven down-cast,
Like red leaves be swept away !
Kyrie, eleyson !
Christe, eleyson !



THE CHANGING YEAR.



FROM bud to leaf, from leaf to branches grey ;
 From flower-besprinkled meadows all aglow
 To broad expanse of bright white cheerless snow ;
 From early Spring to Winter's sombre day—
 The year has speeded on its changeful way.
 And yet the year dies not, for we'll we know
 He does but sleep to live anew, and so
 "The year is dead ! Long live the year," we say.

So too with Man : he hastens from his birth,
 To Youth, to Manhood, to Maturity,
 And then at length, when his life-work is done,
 He does but sleep awhile beneath the earth,
 To wake anew the Father's face to see,
 In changeless realms of never-ending sun.



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